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Lesley University
Ph.D. Program in Educational Studies
DISSERTATION DEFENSIVE STATEMENT

Dissertation Title:
**Hearing Whiteness, Seeing Race:
Women leaders give visibility to their White identity**

A DISSERTATION

submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Lesley University
October 2006

DEDICATION

Penny, another spinner, who now works full-time managing her company, *Spinning Company*, where she continues spinning. Her passion for her family is all the more intense because she now belongs to another.

To my children, born and yet to be born, and to all others on the spinning wheel, "you have" extra wool, Dad. May the results of your spinning and dyeing be always good.

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DEDICATION

To my mother Jeanne, who sets such a loving example with her support and interest, even when I'm not very interesting. Her passion is her family -- all six of us. She still shows us how to believe in ourselves.

To my father Stan, who pushed me to go out and see more of the world he longed to see. Here's the latest, Dad. May the results of your encouragement help all of us see more clearly.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For walking every mile of these doctoral work years, my leading acknowledgment goes to David Arnold, my husband, first reader, editor, companion, nudger, supporter and best friend. My children, Colin and Lindsay, marched through most of high school and college while I toiled in a similar venue. You all keep me feeling young and so hopeful.

I would have no thesis without my cooperative respondents. While they have been promised anonymity, their earnestness and their candor must be made public. They have, indeed, made a difference. Bill Dandridge remained loyal as my senior advisor for the duration of this adventure through both my Doctoral Study Committee and Dissertation Committee phases. The members of those committees: Diane Goodman, Bard Hamlen, Lewis Rambo and Cheryl Smith. They all read, and read. I have learned immensely not only from their expertise, but in the example they set with their generosity of time and spirit.

Caroline Heller, the Lesley doctoral issues group and Jo Ann Gammel provided every bit as much support as all of the coursework and inspiring faculty along the way. Cheryl Harris served as reader, colleague and sage. Frank Davis stepped in with a dedicated editor's eye. Stacy Blake-Beard never turned down a request for advice and wisdom. Lastly, to my friends, my extended family and community of faith. It takes a village. I have been blessed.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates what it means for women leaders to identify as White. The purpose is to examine a sense of racial identity and how that identity affects a sense of self as a leader. Twelve women answered questions from a designed interview protocol in two settings that occurred approximately four weeks apart. I also administered the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale of Helms et al.

This study suggests two general findings. Women leaders who successfully recalled the details of positive early childhood relationships with children of color demonstrated a distinct ability to both address their whiteness and retain and use their sense of initiative and leadership skills across race. These women showed a higher level of appreciation across race, recalled situations of feeling White more frequently and comfortably, addressed their whiteness and explored situations of themselves as members of a race. These women compared significantly with others who recalled only *situations* involving race as a young child, and not positive *individual relationships*.

Secondly, White women leaders experienced difficulty in addressing issues of their whiteness. When dealing with issues of race, they tended to set aside numerous leadership characteristics they had defined for themselves. The meaning of leadership for all respondents was disrupted or disturbed at times when their race became a consideration. In some cases, leadership traits they had described about themselves changed in meaning when issues of race were involved. Examples of those characteristics and traits included courage, intuition, opportunity, access, delivering, followup, conscientiousness, and involvement. When the women were asked what gets in their way of efforts involving issues of race, most cited their insufficient leadership ability. Some of the same language used to describe their leadership strengths early in the study was absent from their repertoire, or appeared as traits they felt they needed to develop.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Identifying the problem

The late summer of 2005 found its place in history with the impact of devastating hurricanes in the Gulf Coast of the United States. The damage caused mostly by Hurricane Katrina churned up issues that did not ebb with the storm surges. Weeks full of daily news coverage revealed and reinforced images of evacuees and the newly homeless who had the least access to resources, and the least control over their lives. Cars, contacts and cash seemed to be the tickets to escaping this storm's wrath, and the public began to see who was least likely to have those tickets. With rare exception, images showed those who would not be identified as White. Author James Carroll wrote: "The scandal of rank poverty was exposed, and if beholding it was like seeing something indecent, that's because such poverty in this nation is exactly that – indecent" (Carroll, 2005). Historian John Hope Franklin wrote about how the most devastating storm altered our view of race in this country: "The tragedy is that Katrina changed our view at all. We should have known the things that Katrina brought out" (Franklin, as cited in Solomon, 2005, p. 23).

These hurricane forces of nature prompted the media to provide a *majority* representation of racial populations historically described as *minorities*. News stories and television images resurfaced the subject of our national dilemma involving race, a complex and disputed notion that I will explore in this thesis. Nature's forces helped identify in fresh ways the problem that drove this research. As discussions on race found renewed visibility, renewed issues arose around *having* those discussions. Those issues involved what was talked about, what was left out, which race was important to discuss and which wasn't, what became a focus of action, and what was left behind, who was leading those discussions, and who chose what impact they would or would not ultimately have on others.

The hurricanes disrupted the class and racial order of the human communities they struck. The storms could have helped us understand the behaviors of those who identify as White in a revealing and educating way. We had media moments available for us to interrogate with an eye toward their whiteness, another complex and disputed notion that I will explore. The challenge of these events, and of my research, is that this didn't happen, or didn't happen for long, and was not associated with whiteness. This challenge and missed opportunity to understand suggest large questions about those who have more tickets, as in resources and access to power, those who experience the privilege of identifying as White in the U.S.

This challenge, as investigated in this study, drove my research long before the storms struck. These forces of nature simply provided another backdrop, another method of identification: What does it mean when most of those who ultimately answer those very large questions cited above are also those with the tickets, and are inevitably

associated with one dominant racial group? What happens when members of a dominant culture turn their focus away from the victims, the *other*, and begin to reflect on the role they play? Even more specific to my study are women organizational leaders from that White racial classification. What happens when these people are asked to explore the meaning of being a part of a racial group?

Statement of the problem

Our racial identity contributes to our understanding of race (Bowser & Hunt, 1996; Helms, 1995; McIntosh, 1990; Roediger, 1994). Racial identity informs how we view race relations, and how or whether we act on individual, cultural and institutional levels (Delgado, 1995; Terry, 1970; Wellman, 1977). White racial identity in the United States brings added dimensions of a dominant population and disproportionate access to resources, privilege and positions of power (hooks, 1988; Wellman, 1993). This added dimension is often in play when White racial identity in the literature is described as whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993; Lopez, 1995).

When research focuses on how whiteness is identified, I believe it is possible to expand our understanding of how whiteness contributes to the many attitudes and ways of being of all people. By *being*, I mean anyone's larger sets of assumptions, self-esteem, and sense of entitlements or lack thereof, and not just racial issues. My main focus is to understand more about what racial identity means for White women and how that identity affects the way they lead. I believe the quality of their leadership can be tied to a developing understanding of racial identity. This understanding can include how they use their power and position, their tickets, around the issues of race and racism. I believe that

a critical examination of these dimensions of racial identity will help us more fully recognize the racism in our society, which many (Hitchcock, 2002; Kivel, 1996; Lipsitz, 1995) believe has become more of a challenge *since* the formal Civil Rights era that took us into the late 1960s. They believe, as do I, that this growing recognition must foreshadow any growth in our efforts to develop as a multiracial society.

I believe White women leaders have much to gain in finding meaning in their whiteness because race is part of who we are, how we think, how we're taught to behave. As with implications of any racial identity, a developing knowledge of who White women are as White both limits and expands them as beings and as leaders. Historical and cultural factors in this nation, perhaps even broader oppressive tendencies, make this meaning very challenging to uncover.

White people are members of a race that bargained, captured or assumed historic power and privilege when this country formed. For the most part, I as a White woman have been taught that this was some combination of good or necessary or inevitable. Collectively speaking, the men of this Eurocentric culture continue to hold that power and privilege centuries later. Women leaders are in a particularly good place to see how this pattern affects their potential and capabilities as they experience this power imbalance played out across gender. I believe White women leaders have every bit as much to gain by seeing how the White in this pattern affects who they are and how they behave. The more they know about what influences them, the stronger they become in using that knowledge in understanding themselves and others. They have the potential, as they come to terms with themselves as members of a race, of leading with their whole selves. Without a developing understanding of this racial identity, I believe that a

substantial part of their being remains shut down. A substantial part of how others are affected by habits of whiteness is denied, or never known.

Volumes have been written about leadership, as I discovered in my review of the literature. Authors delve into defining it, improving on it, transforming others through it, developing it, searching for what drives it, uncovering what gets in the way, and advancing society with it. If this is what authors think about leadership, then surely we must value how such a large part of identity as White advances leadership, or blocks it. We certainly look at the impact of racial identity in leaders who are not White, or how they might or might not lead based on their race. We are wise not to simply forget or ignore the impact of the White race, or the tickets that Whites collectively hold.

While much can be found in the literature about women and about leadership, separately and in tandem, a third dimension of race changes this equation. The literature shows some studies of women of color and leadership, but very little beyond this. The need for a scholarly exploration of White women leaders with a particular focus on the effects of racial identity became even more apparent through the lack of such exploration.

Research question

My dissertation research will address what it means for women leaders to identify as White. My key question: How do women leaders find meaning in being White, and what impact does that meaning have on their sense of themselves as leaders?

I gathered stories of experiences and attitudes they have about their race and about being leaders. The women were asked to reflect and describe what it means to be White. They were asked to give attention to detail in ways that they sometimes said they

had never talked about, or even thought about. I am motivated by my scholarly work and by my experience as a professional consultant and trainer who has devoted many years to issues of cross-cultural/cross-racial relations. Both worlds show how social customs, complexity and history of race relations, even taboos, surrounding the topic of being White in this country have kept their experiences unexplored. Scholars whose research has addressed these issues of whiteness in ways that encouraged my own work include Frankenberg, 1993; hooks, 1992; Lorde, 1984; McIntosh, 1995, 1990; McKinney, 2005, and initially Du Bois, 1920.

My role as researcher

This research is part of a long and personal journey to better understand issues of race. No one encouraged my examination of my race in my development, at least not directly using the language of race. As I look through the lens of whiteness studies, which I will discuss in my literature review, I suspect my view of my race was encouraged routinely, but not under the rubric of a *member* of a race. Culture might have been an occasionally used word. Even that was rare, and would have been a reference to the *other* Eurocentric groups outside of my own rural, predominantly German-American heritage.

My racial identity development emerged from assimilation more than articulated norms that were clearly identified only with culture -- never race. A stance of *this is how we do it* was a method demonstrated more than spoken. A large, geographically close immediate family (five siblings, six sets of aunts and uncles, and 20 first cousins) made that demonstration of culture dense and recurring, and subsequently normal or invisible. An all-White, largely farming community reinforced the norm. Race, as we were taught

to recognize it, was elsewhere. You had to drive out of my Kansas small town or turn on the TV to find it. Once a year, you might glimpse it in person as *custom cutters*, temporary harvest workers, worked their way from Mexico to North Dakota following the ripening wheat.

My sense of myself as White remained largely vague and unarticulated until I began my own diversity work 20 years ago. My study of the concept of whiteness began only with my doctoral research. My career in diversity consulting grew out of a human resources role in the newsroom of a major daily paper. Hiring and maintaining a diverse workforce that reflected the readership of the Boston area rose as a personal priority. Views of Whites about whiteness generally didn't factor effectively into what I knew about racism and about anti-racism efforts. My focus professionally was inclusion of the *other*, on what was different and missing from my culture. This incomplete perspective on racial diversity work drew me toward one of the primary tenets of the field of whiteness studies: that the dominant culture must look at itself as a race and as the group that sets norms of behavior and keeps systemic social practices in place. I wanted to examine and advance that field of study.

Purpose and goal of the study

The specific purpose is to examine the sense of racial identity of 12 White women leaders and how that identity affects their sense of themselves as leaders. My goal is to contribute to the body of knowledge about race relations in this country. More specifically, I intended to give these women a forum to contribute to the knowledge about how their membership in a White race affects how they lead. I expected to find a body of

knowledge that is very much in front of us, perhaps quite unnoticed, and essential to the way these women make leadership decisions and try to have an impact, or choose inaction or indecision. Such knowledge could affect how all White women choose to make decisions, and to *be* in their various roles. I did this through a structured, replicable protocol of research on the effects of identifying with one's White racial identity. This dissertation provides reporting and analysis of an investigation into the topic of White women leaders. I look at how they link their concepts of whiteness to their sense of themselves as leaders. I explore the salient points of connection across those two phenomena.

Organization of the study

The second chapter of this dissertation offers a review of literature in the areas I have chosen to study, and puts my research within the context of other scholars. Chapter 3 describes the research method used for this work. The remaining Chapters 4 through 6 report, analyze and interpret the findings in the stories and reflections of women leaders about their sense of themselves as members of a race.

Chapter 4 reports on findings, including brief case studies of the 12 women. This chapter also looks at components of a change process that these women describe in their experience with their own racial identity. I then adopt a cross-case analysis, using models of whiteness behavior and offer a framework for how the responses of my respondents fit within those models. This includes patterns and common ground in their assessments. This chapter also analyzes the results of a theoretical framework of this research, which is Helms' et al (1995, 1993, 1990, 1984) theory of White racial identity.

These statuses of development constitute one structured and established method of describing how the participant's attitudes are influenced by their White racial identity.

Chapter 5 offers an interpretation of this research project and a personal reflection. I connect the findings and analyses to the introductory statements, purpose and focus. This includes approaches and concepts of my respondents that exist outside of the models I have studied, and reflections on the research overall. Chapter 6 offers a conclusion and sense of future direction that includes recommendations and implications for future research, theory and practice.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

A decision to study the racial identity development of White women leaders opened the door on several domains. This chapter looks at three domains that factored most significantly in my work. They involve whiteness studies, White racial identity development, and leadership involving White women.

My perspective within any of these fields is only one perspective that is accompanied, often unconsciously I'm sure, by subjectivity and observational bias. My attempts to understand these fields demanded a constant effort at introspection because of my situation as a White, European-American, middle-class woman. How could I be introspective about these domains of study? How could I do a better job of looking in the mirror before I looked out the window? I spend a great deal of time trying to address other racial constructs. But what does whiteness represent, and what does a scholarly study of whiteness mean?

Several terms are embedded in a study of racial identity and of whiteness: race, culture, including dominant culture, and identity, including racial identity. I will attempt to define each as they apply to my research.

Race is a reference to social customs and constructs that have been created and legally defined as standards. For the purposes of this study, race gets its meaning through systems of privilege, power and oppression – some very obvious and some invisibly subtle. I focus on examining one's internalized reactions to being treated as though one belongs to a racial group, or as though others do.

Culture refers to attitudes and behavior that are characteristic of a particular group, as well as to knowledge and values shared by that group. Dominant culture refers to a group that holds predominant political, ideological, and economic power in a society. While statistics show a changing society over the course of history in the United States, this group has historically been defined as White and male.

Many terms are used to define identity, although they do a better job of describing the concept than defining it. Those terms include personality, characteristics, classifications, social roles, traits or self-images. Erikson defined identity as “a subjective sense of invigorating sameness and continuity” (1966/1976, p. 60). For the purposes of this study, I consider identity as a developmental process. Two other terms involving identity are important to my research: Cultural identity is the perception or feeling of a group, or of an individual, as either is influenced by their belonging to a group or culture. This perception can vary dramatically from one person to another, or one group to another, within a larger culture. Within cultural identity, racial identity is most important to my research. Helms definition of racial identity is most helpful for my study: “the psychological or internalized consequences of being socialized in a racially oppressive environment and the characteristics of self that develop in response to or in synchrony with either benefiting from or suffering under such oppression” (1996, p. 147).

With these terms as a foundation, this chapter begins with an exploration of the emerging academic field of whiteness studies.

What's White got to do with it? An exploration of critical whiteness studies

Like a foreign word I couldn't quite translate, whiteness and whiteness studies have found their way increasingly into my reading. For decades, the study of racial diversity has been important for me. I saw value in African-American studies, peace and conflict programs, concerns about immigrant groups, cultural film studies, explorations in Asian influence, for example. I learned on many levels from active research and involvement in areas with code names for races other than White like *inner-city* or *developing nation*.

These studies and programs appeared to share a common focus. For the majority of the population, they examined the effects, impact and influence of an *other*. In addition, these subjects grew from the basic social and physical sciences and the arts. For me, those larger fields remained rich with thinking that explained, rationalized, and justified a sense of power and privilege in America, often without ever discussing it. Scholars of whiteness studies appeared to *begin* with that premise of dominance. The authors I cite in this review speak to the underlying way White people are seen as superior, and how this pervades the functioning as a society. They look at the notion of White supremacy in its larger, more generic sense, and not just the institutionalized movements that capture headlines. Learning moments abound in this field. I felt I had hit a mother lode.

I use the word *emerging* with caution in talking about this field of whiteness studies. I also use it with respect for the idea that a critical study of whiteness arguably began centuries ago alongside the early development of concepts of race. Earlier examples of theorists and researchers include Baldwin, 1953-2000; DuBois, 1903-2003, and Franklin, 1956-2006, all of whom laid groundwork for what emerges in this literature review. As a subject of study, whiteness no doubt also was deeply alive among this nation's racially oppressed, beginning with its Native Americans prior to colonization (Takaki, 1993) and later with its enslaved populations.

In this chapter I look primarily at the recent and growing presence of whiteness studies in academia as defined by its predominant method of record: scholarly publications. Historian Peter Kolchin (2002) tells us that whiteness studies are everywhere, and in this explicit form have emerged somewhat suddenly. "The rapid proliferation of a genre that appears to have come out of nowhere is little short of astonishing" (p. 154). Scholarly writing is admittedly only one indicator of the proliferation of the field, since some now see whiteness studies as an "academic industry, with its own dissertation mill, conferences, publications, and no doubt soon its junior faculty" (Ignatiev, 1997).

Yet nearly 10 years later, Roediger (2006) reminds us that critical studies of whiteness are only now reaching adolescence. He says the field in the United States has no journals or professional association (which he says it does have in Australia). He notes that it still has no presence as an academic department anywhere. "Yet despite its modest proportions, it is at times castigated as if it sits atop the academic food chain, begging to be brought down to size" (Roediger, 2006, p. 5)

In this literature review of whiteness studies, I point out developing patterns and evolving themes. These include themes that have arisen from attempts to define the word whiteness or a White race. Other themes rise from the elements of power and privilege that emerge as support for that definition. Indeed, the struggle for a uniform definition may point directly to a far larger social struggle of discussing and maintaining any notion of racial difference.

My strategy is to review the literature of this growing field that lies across several disciplines. The most useful contributions came predominantly from the social science disciplines of psychology, sociology, education and organizational behavior. I also consider the historic and legal aspects of explaining and maintaining a sense of whiteness in the United States, as most material treats the term as a social construction, not a scientific racial category. Scholars mentioned in this work write from positions in academia predominantly within the U.S., with exceptions from both Canada and England. Because of the proliferation of material on whiteness studies since the Civil Rights era, the past 50 years serve as my time frame. Although movement for civil rights is ongoing, the existence as a formal era, for the purposes of this study, is 1954 through 1968. The era is bracketed by historical efforts at racial integration beginning with the cases that resulted in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Civil Rights Acts and the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. Because a review of whiteness studies begs the question of the meaning of whiteness itself, both the field of studies and meaning of the term will be investigated here.

Historical and chronological perspectives of whiteness studies

Events of the past half century delivered formal desegregation efforts and the subsequent Civil Rights era to this nation. For some, this brought dramatic change in the way they were being asked to deal with and conceive of race. For some, the era meant varying degrees of closure to problems of Black-White relations in this country. For others, the period ushered in another era demonstrated in part in this field of whiteness work that has changed the behavior and the language of those who identified as White, but has not ended the privilege of whiteness or its status in the United States as a dominant race (Bowser & Hunt, 1996; Delgado, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; Fernandez, 1996). For example, psychologist Batts (1998) argues that an old-fashioned racist behavior that gave one form to whiteness has not been eliminated, just replaced. By her theory, the raised consciousness of some Americans now accepts non-race-related reasons for behaviors that continue to deny equal access to all racial groups. These reasons might include examples of differences in personality, culture, or socioeconomic indicators.

This same post-Civil Rights era showed a corresponding increase in scholarly whiteness studies, although whiteness was hardly a new subject, particularly among those who did not, and do not, identify as White. Examples mentioned above include the race-conscious classics of Baldwin, DuBois and Franklin. More recently, among institutions of higher learning, the field falls under headings that include critical race theory, racial identity theory and critical whiteness studies, which are explored here.

Delgado (1995) traces the appearance of critical race theory to the mid-1970s, and describes the theory with the premise that racism is normal. He cites the work of Derrick

Bell (an African American) and Alan Freeman (a White), both of whom went “on record as deeply distressed over the slow pace of racial reform in the United States” (Delgado, 1995, p. xiii). These scholars and others believed the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s had stalled. Indeed for many, its gains were being rolled back. New approaches were needed to understand and come to grips with what these theorists saw as more subtle, but still deeply entrenched, varieties of racism. The basic insights of critical race theory, as summarized from Delgado’s analysis:

Because racism is an ingrained feature of our landscape, it looks ordinary and natural to persons in the culture. Formal equal opportunity -- rules and laws that insist on treating blacks and whites (for example) alike -- can thus remedy only the more extreme...injustice.... (The theory) tells stories to challenge racial oppression and the status quo. The myths, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make up our culture about race are analyzed, and used to construct a different reality. The rules, practices, assignments of privilege and power are not fixed, but pointed out in writing and in speaking. (The theory uses) the premise of “interest-convergence.” This idea holds that whites will encourage or tolerate racial advances for blacks only when they also promote white self interest (1995, pp. xiv-xv).

Another kind of whiteness work that emerged in this period involved the development of racial identity theories. Terry (1970) and Wellman (1977) introduced the idea of White identity, according to Bowser and Hunt (1996). As new writing and theory proliferated, as well as significant social, psychological and historical research since 1980:

A historic and contemporary picture of Whites is being drawn that reveals heterogeneity, conscience, class consciousness, levels of self- and racial awareness, fear of losing ‘white’ privilege, and more awareness of the plight of Blacks than we had ever thought (Bowser & Hunt, 1996, p. xvii).

In more recent and primarily ethnographic work, Frankenberg (1993) develops a concept of White identity as three moments, which she later describes as discursive

repertoires (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 188). She details these moments as essentialist racism, color- and power-evasiveness, and race-cognizant reassessments and reorientations of race difference. Essentialist racism is her term for race difference that is understood in hierarchical terms of essential, biological inequality. Her use of color- and power-evasiveness is roughly synonymous with color-blindness, which asserts that “we are all the same under the skin; that, culturally, we are converging; that, materially, we have the same chances in U.S. society; and that -- the sting in the tail -- any failure to achieve is therefore the fault of people of color themselves” (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 14). Her race-cognizant reassessments again emphasize difference, even essentialist difference. The difference is defined autonomously as part of one’s own culture, values, aesthetic or standards. As some of the people in Frankenberg’s study moved toward race-cognizant strategies for thinking through race, “the point at which appropriations of that repertoire emerge out of internal contradiction, toward more coherent articulations of the meanings of race difference,” is likely the point emerging from a lowered resistance to learning and the employment of that knowledge (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 189). She goes on to say that contradictions she recognized in her respondents can be exposed or obscured linguistically, but not resolved. One reaches the limit of a focus on discourse. Walking that talk becomes the new focus.

Frankenberg describes these moments as the first, second and third phases in U.S. race discourse because they originated in that order. These moments do not necessarily unfold chronologically, she adds, rather each takes center stage at various times to help think through and make meaning of race. The first two moments occurred most often *before* the formal Civil Rights movement, and the third rose as a result of that era.

Frankenberg also notes that third phase opposes both of the others and includes awareness of structural and institutional inequity and the need to enhance the value of subordinated cultures.

In what I characterize as an evolving sense of critical whiteness studies, one more oriented toward change, social scientist Levine-Rasky (2000) carries forward some of the initial themes explained above along with a more proactive stance. She explains that whiteness work views racism not only as a system of structures that marginalizes racialized others, but is woven into economic, political, psychological, and social advantages for Whites at the expense of racialized groups (hooks, 1988; Wellman, 1993). “Work on critical whiteness asks that whites initiate a dismantling of unjust and racist social relations or divest themselves from the power they embody in social institutions and help reformulate and replace our inequitable society with a truly democratic social order” (Levine-Rasky, 2000, p. 272).

Of all those considered here, the most provocative stance toward change is the *race traitor* or *new abolitionist* project, which advocates the destruction and replacement of whiteness. “A traitor to the white race is someone who is nominally classified as white but who defies white rules so strenuously as to jeopardize his or her ability to draw upon the privileges of whiteness” (Ignatiev, 1997). Ignatiev and Garvey, as two White male academicians of history, began a journal in 1993 called *Race Traitor* with the intent of creating an intellectual center that reaches out “to white people who are dissatisfied with the terms of membership in the white club” (Editorial, 1993). The ideology that supports their work has spawned a sister organization (Flores & Moon, 2002) with chapters in numerous states that produces a newsletter, *The New Abolitionist*. Others who favor a

dismantling, rather than a reformulation, of whiteness include legal scholar Lopez (1995) and historian Roediger (1994).

In *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*, published in 1995, its sequel, *Critical White Studies* in 1997, and a third volume in 2000, Delgado et al present “the best of an emerging body of scholarship that analyzes what it means to be White, as well as a number of classic works dealing with the White race and its legacy” (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997, p. xvii). The volume of writings in two of these publications offers a curious snapshot of how dramatically the field of scholarly whiteness studies is expanding.

The first edition contains 50 articles; the second, 114, both with a heavy emphasis on civil rights and other social and legal perspectives. My analysis of over 160 articles was limited by variables that included the editors’ choice of material and the chronological cap of two specific publication dates (1995 and 1997). In addition, the third volume (2000) was withheld from analysis because it served as a second edition to Critical Race Theory and contained a number of repeated articles from the 1995 edition. Still, the numbers give an interesting sense of the modern-day proliferation of writing in this field.

In summary, more articles have been published since 1993 than in all of the previous years combined. This means more than half of the articles have been published only in the last 10 years. Three percent of the articles were published before 1980, and roughly only another three percent appeared from 1981-85. A table of the individual publication dates of articles in those publications appears in Appendix A.

Levine-Rasky (2000) cites the work of critics such as Ellsworth, Fine, Giroux, McLaren and Sleeter as part of a steady growth in the 1990s alone towards framing whiteness. Other works that break ground on issues of whiteness (Rains, 1998) include: Feagin and Vera, 1995; McIntosh, 1992; and Roman 1993. In a further acknowledgment of the proliferation of the field, Hardiman agrees that contributions to whiteness studies “exploded” in the 1990s and cites a national organization, the Center for the Study of White American Culture, which has convened three national conferences on the study of whiteness (Hardiman, 2002, p. 117). The White Privilege Conference has occurred for seven years, with a website (www.whiteprivilegeconference.com) that lists 600 participants from 32 different states at its most recent gathering.

In a nod to technology, Gorski (2003) explores whiteness studies online in a column billed as the first of a series. The column summarizes the essence of 15 different websites that examine racial inequalities through the lens of White privilege and power. Gorski describes the sites as providing “an important counter-examination of race politics as well as crucial points of connection for white people grappling with the significance and meaning of their racial identities” (Gorski, p. 28).

What does whiteness mean?

My initial probes into the meaning of White or whiteness quickly revealed the complexity and emotional weight of the subject. Whiteness wasn’t merely a social construct of race, it was dozens of things. Alternately, it was a dimension, an idea, an identity, or a mechanism, to name only a few. A dictionary definition grounds the term in stark basics: “the quality or state of the achromatic color of greatest lightness (bearing

In a word: Defining whiteness

In my efforts to define whiteness in this literature review, I focused on a single word or synonym -- what scholars *called* the term. I found these references, which added to the complexity of the definition. Perhaps they also illuminate the difficulty of maintaining the social construction of any term about race.

artifice	location
category	mechanism
construct	norm
description	practice(s)
dimension	race
dynamic	reflection
function	social position
group	standpoint
idea	status
ideology	trope
identity	

the least resemblance to black)" (Online, 2004). The inset here offers more detail.

The subject of whiteness first found its way into law in the U.S. Congress in 1790, according to Lopez (1995), when Congress limited citizenship naturalization to White persons. "Though the requirements for naturalization changed frequently thereafter, this racial prerequisite to citizenship endured...until 1952" (Lopez, p. 542). Countless immigrants found themselves arguing their racial identity in order to naturalize, and the courts were required to articulate rationales for the divisions they were

promulgating. This included whether a petitioner's race was to be measured by skin color, facial features, national origin, language, culture, ancestry, the speculations of scientists, popular opinion or some combination of the above, as Lopez describes.

In short, the courts were responsible not only for deciding who was white, but *why* someone was white. ...In 1922 and 1923, the Supreme Court intervened... securing common sense as the appropriate legal meter of race. ...This set the terms of a debate about whether race is social or natural. ...The Supreme Court's elevation of common knowledge as the legal meter of race...illustrates the social basis for racial categorization (Lopez, p. 543-45).

So who is White? Kivel (1996) gives a general perspective for the United States that is steeped in European history. In western Europe those with English heritage were

perceived to be pure White. The Irish, Russians and Spanish were considered darker races, sometimes Black, and certainly non-White. The White category was slowly extended to include northern- and middle-European people and yet, Kivel writes, even 50 years ago still excluded eastern or southern European peoples such as Italians, Poles, Russians and Greeks. Others concur that Jewish Americans, Italian Americans, Irish Americans and Latinos have, at different times, been viewed as both White and non-White (Frankenberg, 1993; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 1991; Rothenberg, 2002). The shifting nature of power, privilege and oppression *within* privileged groups that I observe here adds to the conflicting and shifting nature of the category White. These authors take a hard look at the system of institutional whiteness and supremacy in the role played by Whites who were given power through groups and institutions such as labor unions, the Catholic Church and the Democratic Party.

Hitchcock (2002) agrees that Whites are those who descended from Europeans who have settled in the United States, although he finds broader illustration of whiteness in some of the synonyms in use. These include Caucasian, a term that Hitchcock notes actually includes people from the Indian subcontinent of Asia. Other terms are European-American, Euro-American, Anglo, non-Hispanic White, people from Egypt and the Middle East (by the U.S. government's Directive 15), as well as the pejorative slang terms for the "race": honky, ofay, haole, cracker and gringo.

Ignatiev (1995) further explored the changing meaning of whiteness in his historical review that is well described by its title: *How the Irish became white*, as did Roediger (2002, 1994) in his work on America's immigrant populations and the development of the American working class. Barrett and Roediger (2002) vividly

illustrate categories used to describe the southern European and Mediterranean populations that immigrated around the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These terms, such as *not-yet-White ethnic, temporary Negro, hunky and guinea*, signal the tentativeness of a definition of whiteness that now allows all of these people to identify as White.

In formulating a legal system definition of whiteness during this same immigration era, Lopez says U.S. courts resorted to the common knowledge of those already considered White. He laments that “virtually no court owned up to the falsity of race, each court preferring instead to formulate fictions” (Lopez, as cited in Delgado, 1995, p. 549). Resting on these formulations, Lopez wonders about the “extraordinary lengths to which the courts went, the absurd and self-contradictory position they assumed” or the seeming anger in ruling that certain applicants were not White. He sees “disturbing facets of judicial inquietude... that arguably belie...the deep personal significance to the judges of what they had been called upon to interpret, the terms of their own existence” (p. 549).

More than 50 years after the 1922 and 1923 high court considerations, scholars are spending ever-increasing time talking *about* whiteness. This literature review seeks to analyze definitions *of* whiteness, and to determine themes behind the repeated characteristics used by authors. I will attempt to demonstrate that two pervasive characteristics from which all others seemed to flow are those of power and privilege. Beyond a discussion of these two characteristics come additional ways of maintaining whiteness. They are discussed below as: ideology and social construct, multiple and changing meanings depending on context, whiteness and other identities, race

transparency or invisibility, and forgetfulness of both the present and the past. Two additional themes seemed to clear the most workable path toward a resolution of the dilemmas of whiteness: the challenges of dualistic thinking and a counterpart of sorts, the sense of individual vs. collective sense of dealing with racism. The subheadings also, perhaps not coincidentally, signify some of the most salient reasons for how and why definitions of whiteness remain elusive, evolve or change.

Bringing power and privilege into focus

Scholars' attempts to define White or whiteness illuminate complex and overlapping characteristics in the literature. Two recurring descriptive characteristics are that of power and privilege (Frankenberg, 1993; McIntosh, 1990; Wellman 1977; Wildman, 1996). They undergird the definitions of whiteness and often connect other characteristics used frequently by scholars.

The difficulty of getting at the content of *whiteness* connects with the difficulty of getting at its *power* and *privilege* and *oppressor* status. Indeed, for many authors, these four terms are often used synonymously. I will attempt to clarify their meaning by demonstrating their use. In the study of whiteness, racism refers to a system of White superiority. Dominant group members of this well-entrenched system, Whites or the *oppressor* group, have the *power* to establish characteristics that define the societal norm. These characteristics are held up as good and virtuous, and benefit those in the privileged groups. In fact, the members of those privileged groups have established the goodness of these characteristics and maintain them through their own policies and practices and beliefs, as described below.

This system of White superiority and *power* allows certain advantages or *privileges*. *Whiteness* is the currency that gives access to that privilege (Goodman, 2001; McIntosh, 1988). *Privilege* is an “invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious” (McIntosh, 1988, p. 1). She describes *privilege* as an “invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks” and lists dozens of examples.

Even when Whites might not feel privileged by this *power* system because of economic, social and/or class-based disadvantages or other subordinate social identities, we remain products of the culture that instills its attitudes in us (Wildman and Davis, 1996) and still provides us with the concrete benefits. Members who have this unearned *privilege* can rely on it and can avoid objecting to oppression if they want. Privilege is rarely seen by the holder of privilege (Frankenberg 1993; Goodman, 2001; McIntosh, 1990; Wildman, 1996).

The *oppressor* status is not just the obvious and news-making efforts of White supremacy groups. In my research, the important meaning of oppressor comes in various forms: *The status of oppressor* involves the *power* to avoid, the *power* to exclude or ignore, the *power* to provide or deny access to resources and opportunities, *power* to choose behaviors, including silence, that help maintain a better group and lesser groups. The practice of this oppression is often subconscious. I will explain each of these in more detail, beginning with the *power* to avoid.

The idea of race exists because people give it particular meaning, legal scholar Wildman asserts (1996), a meaning that changes with time, place, and circumstances. But one constant remains:

The privileging of whiteness through different devices, social patterns, even laws. This racial positioning is maintained in part through an unwritten rule that it cannot be discussed. In fact, the corollary rule mandates that we talk about the societal desire for equality while avoiding an examination of White racial privilege or any other privilege (Wildman, 1996, p. xi).

She explains that an unwritten rule makes talking about race or discrimination in the dominant discourse unacceptable, or certainly difficult to sustain. She believes that those with privilege so earnestly want not to discriminate that they privilege their conduct by failing to examine it critically. Without this examination, the systems of privilege are replicated and the cycle of exclusion continues.

Frankenberg (1993) concurs with the *power to avoid* that defines whiteness:

... rather than complete nonacknowledgment of any kind of difference power evasion involves a selective attention to difference, allowing into conscious scrutiny -- even conscious embrace -- those differences that make the speaker feel good but continuing to evade by means of partial description, euphemism, and self-contradiction those that make the speaker feel bad (i.e. naming of inequality, power imbalance, hatred or fear) (Frankenberg, p. 156).

This power to avoid also is apparent as a privilege of whiteness in other, related analysis. The privilege allows people to be “conscious of inequality and injustice without condemning themselves, to recognize a societal problem without implicating the society, and to defend their interests without referring to genes or race” (Wellman, 1977, p. 221). In his analysis, this power is possible because Whites recognize racial inequality abstractly or as blocked access to opportunity. They explain the problem in terms of the victims, and they solve the problem in ways that do not affect White people. They get to

insert distance into their thinking, justify their position in non-prejudiced terms and avoid an imperative for social change. “In short, they get off the hook and defend their racial privilege as well” (Wellman, 1977, p. 221).

The privileges of whiteness are also demonstrated in *power to choose* action or inaction, or speaking out or silence, in the face of oppression to others. As an example, Wildman reflects on the behavior of a fellow attorney screening candidates for jury duty who asks only those appearing of Asian descent if they spoke English. Wildman wanted to focus on the subordinating conduct of the attorney, but she did not. “I exercised my white privilege by my silence. I exercised my privilege to opt out of engagement...” (Wildman & Davis, 1996, as cited in Wildman, 1996, p. 12).

While there have been skirmishes over the meaning of whiteness since the inception of the term, one characteristic prevails in whiteness studies: For those defined as White people, the whiteness literature argues that assimilation into, not exclusion from, the status quo remains a predictable result. That doesn’t mean a status quo, however, that leaves all Whites feeling the same about their situations.

Surveys of workforce representation, for example, reflect this assimilation as their statistics continue to demonstrate the pervasiveness of Whites who are in power. Still, not all of those who are White are in power. Nor is the link between Americanness and power accurate, because not all Americans have the same access to power (Frankenberg, 1993). Wildman complements this thinking: “Most of us are privileged in some ways and not in others....The experience of both privilege and subordination in different aspects of our lives causes the experiences to be blurred, and the presence of privilege is further hidden from our vocabulary and consciousness” (1996, p. 22). Chater adds that since

“privilege and power have historically sedimented along lines mediated by class, caste, nation, race, gender, sexuality and so on, many, if not most people have a complex and contradictory relationship to power and powerlessness, to privilege and oppression” (Chater, as cited in Levine-Rasky, 1994, p. 102). This underprivileged-among-the-privileged phenomenon receives further review below under a section on whiteness and other identities.

An ideology and social construct

Whiteness for many is an orientation, or an integrated set of attitudes and beliefs, even for those who work hard to demonstrate that whiteness has no impact. Wellman’s research (1977) on whiteness provides an example. He marveled at the liberal and open views of many of the Whites he interviewed, with little indication of prejudice on their part. His intrigue diminished when he looked more closely at the solutions these people found acceptable to race-related dilemmas. In the problems faced by non-Whites, his White respondents wanted change to occur within the law, they wanted Blacks integrated into White society, they wanted Blacks to become more educated and to be given equal job opportunities. Lastly, Whites had to cease being prejudiced. He noticed a common thrust to these solutions: “None of them involves a basic change in the lifestyle of white people. Were any of them to be implemented, the racial status quo would prevail” (Wellman, p. 220).

Maher and Tetrault offer a similar perspective on a similar dilemma, except that they write more than 20 years later:

To understand whiteness as a social position is to assign everyone, not only people of color, differentiated places in complex and shifting relations of racialized and gendered hierarchies. But whiteness is more than identity and position. It is also a

pervasive ideology justifying this dominance of one group over others. Whiteness, like maleness, becomes the norm for “human,” the basis for universality and detachment; it is the often silent and invisible basis against which other racial and cultural identities are named as “Other,” measured and marginalized (1998, p. 139).

Ignatiev (1997) adds that whiteness is “nothing but a reflection of privilege, and exists for no other reason than to defend it.... Whiteness has nothing to do with culture and everything to do with social position.”

Multiple and changing meanings depending on context

Thompson distinguished among “whiteness as description,” referring to the assignment of racial categories to physical features; “whiteness as experience,” referring to the daily benefits of being White in our society; and finally “whiteness as ideology,” referring to beliefs, policies, and practices that enable Whites to maintain social power and control (Thompson, 1997, referencing DeRosa, as cited in Maher and Tetrault, p. 139).

The variability of the definition of whiteness is further explored by Lopez who sees the following characteristics standing either alone or in combinations, depending on the local setting in which they appear. From his legal perspective, he examined how the courts constructed the bounds of whiteness by deciding on a case-by-case basis who was not White:

Whiteness is a social construct, a legal artifact, a function of what people believe, a mutable category tied to particular historical moments. ... White is an idea, an evolving social group, an unstable identity subject to expansion and contraction, a trope for welcome migrant groups, a mechanism for excluding those of unfamiliar origin, an artifice of social prejudice (Lopez, 1995, p. 546-7).

Whiteness is further defined by media theorist Ellsworth (1997, (as cited in Maher and Tetrault, 1998, p. 140): "Instead of a fixed, locatable identity, or even social positioning... (it is) a dynamic of cultural production and interrelation." Because whiteness is not an essentialized identity but rather a "product of history and power relations," it is constituted and reconstituted by social activity; both stable and unstable, it is always "more than one thing and never the same thing twice" (p. 140). "We have seen whiteness operate both differentially and simultaneously...it has been physical description, individual identity, social position, ideology... operating "within a particular time period and place, and within particular relations of power" (p. 155).

Sociological surveys (Stowe, 1996) indicate that few White Americans mention whiteness as a quality that they think much about. "In their day-to-day cultural preferences -- food, music, clothing, sports, hairstyles -- the great majority of American Whites display no particular attachment to White things. There does seem to be a kind of emptiness at the core of whiteness" (Stowe, 1996, as cited in McLaren, 1998, p. 74).

The "browning" of American pop culture (Whitaker, 1991, as cited in Hardiman, 2002) or the "Wiggers" -- White youth adopting or co-opting Black culture (Hardiman, 2002, p. 121) are noteworthy signs of the broadening realm of White identity. These examples of current culture are framed on either side by the two extremes that push hard against race neutrality -- a resurgence of active White supremacists on the one hand, and of the race traitors or new abolitionists on the other.

In addition, the changing history and frequency of sexual relationship across race and interracial marriage and families also demonstrates, "White is...an economic and

political category maintained over time by a changing set of exclusionary practices, both legislative and customary" (Frankenberg, as cited in Rodriguez, 1998, p. 36).

One manifestation of whiteness is anything but invisible. This whiteness is worn publicly in a pride of White supremacy that is not denied or resisted; rather it is explicitly articulated mainly in terms of the White pride of the far right. Those who seem loyal to whiteness as a race, as opposed to whiteness as incidental to a more specific identity, include Christian Identity types and Aryan Nation diehards (Stowe, 1996, as cited in McLaren, 1998).

Frankenberg points out a dilemma for those engaged in anti-racist work: if whiteness is emptied of any content other than that which is associated with a political right, or racism or capitalism, this leaves progressive Whites apparently without a genealogy, "To call Americans of European descent 'white' in any celebratory fashion is almost inevitably, in the present political moment, a White supremacist act, and act of backlash" (1993, p. 232).

These multiple and changing meanings spread far and wide. The contexts mentioned here range from pop culture to interracial relationships, and from open white supremacy advocates to progressive anti-racist Whites. These meanings are further complicated by the idea that White is not alone as an identity, which I investigate below.

A mix of identities

Whiteness is one identity for those who claim it, but whiteness is never the only identity. Gender, socioeconomic class, religious affiliations, sexual orientation and ethnicity are just a few examples of other identities. Several scholars consider how the

complexity of our many identities adds correspondingly to the complexity of understanding power and privilege. Wildman and Davis look at some of those layers: “Depending on the number of privileges someone has, s/he may experience the power of choosing the types of struggles in which to engage. Even this choice may be masked as an identification with oppression, thereby making the privilege that enables the choice invisible” (Wildman & Davis, 1996, as cited in Wildman, 1996, p. 12).

The authors’ illustrate as an example the case of a White, female federal judge who said that women should lighten up a bit on the subject of sexual harassment, use their sexuality strategically and enjoy the banter of the workplace. That judge spoke from a privileged position of power, economic wealth and elite connections, the authors pointed out. As such, she was less likely to be harassed. Through her lens of privilege, the authors illustrated how she was allowed to confuse her own position of power with the position of all women.

White privilege as an exercise of the *power of class* is made more difficult because of the “myth that the United States is a classless society; the myth of the class-based power system is denied” (Wildman & Davis, 1996, as cited in Wildman, 1996, p. 19). Other forms of discrimination have been made illegal, but “discrimination based on wealth has been interpreted as permissible by the Constitution. In a society where basic human needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter, can be met only with money, the privilege of class and wealth seems clear.” Wellman (1977) adds that Americans are unified and divided by their other identities, including class. Race might pull people together in a common sentiment, at the same time that class experience is pushing them apart. In a similar vein, common class interests may be divided by race.

Privilege in the form of maleness adds a layer of power to the study of whiteness, and a layer of challenge to White males, especially as they attempt to see themselves as a social group, rather than unique individuals. The literature reflects the challenges of White men who may feel uncomfortable, or at least unfamiliar, not only with whiteness, but with maleness addressed as group-level phenomena (Crowfoot & Chesler, 1996; Bowser and Hunt, 1996). “We are an identifiable and namable social group, and a group with a great deal of power in race and gender relations. Though it is important to avoid stereotyping White males, it is also important to identify some of the characteristic ways in which we work and live, and especially how we interact with others” (Crowfoot & Chesler, 1996, p. 203).

White men typically focus on themselves as individuals and often fail to see commonalities as a social group (Ansaldua, as cited in Crowfoot & Chesler, 1990). “By contrast, women of color often see themselves, and are treated by others, primarily as (members of) a group, and only sometime do we (or they) elect to focus on their individualities and differences (p. 217; Tatum, 1997). “Moreover, whites often see changes in race relations as matters of increased interpersonal understanding and prejudice reduction; people of color are more likely to emphasize changes in structures of power and resources (Blauner, 1972; Mohanty, 1989-90)” (Crowfoot & Chesler, 1996, p. 217).

The added privilege of maleness is reflected in Delgado’s sense of method used in dealing with issues of whiteness, simply because the possession of power will allow it: “Many progressive men seem to think that the entire matter is answered by attitude or intention: once they have adopted a feminist or anti-racist “stance” and proceed with

good intention, then their analysis -- corrective and objective -- simply flows from their intentions" (1997, p. 628).

The mix of identities in the examples here involving gender and race, even class, shows how norms can become blended, leaving any one of them a challenge to separate out.

Race transparency or invisibility

Scholars suggest that part of the sustaining of whiteness, and its sense of invisibility, involves generating norms, or making things seem or appear natural and timeless so that people accept situations, as well as particular ideologies, without ever questioning their socially and politically constructed nature. "Much of the ideological power of whiteness stems from its being hidden as normal" (Maher & Tetrault, 1998, p. 138), "an invisible package of unearned assets" that Whites "can count on cashing in on each day," but about which they were "meant to remain oblivious" (McIntosh, 1988, p. 1).

1). Wildman complements this thinking:

Whiteness is "the systemic conferral of benefit and advantage....Privilege is not visible to the holder of the privilege; privilege appears as part of the normal fabric of daily life, not a something special. Privilege often bestows a higher comfort level in social interaction; the holder of privilege need not feel excluded when the norm describes her own actuality (Wildman, 1996, p. 29-30).

Similarly, Delgado and Stefancic offer a definition of transparency:

The most striking characteristic of whites' consciousness of whiteness is that most of the time we don't have any. I call this the *transparency* phenomenon: the tendency of whites not to think about whiteness, or about norms, behaviors, experiences, or perspectives that are white-specific. Transparency often is the mechanism through which white decisionmakers who disavow white supremacy impose white norms on blacks (1997, p. 629).

Citing the heart of the work of identity theorists, particularly Helms (1990), Delgado and Stefancic stress how the development of a healthy White racial identity requires the individual to overcome those aspects of racism -- whether individual, institutional, or cultural -- that have become a part of that person's identity, and in the process become transparent. In addition, development involves accepting "his or her own whiteness, the cultural implications of being White, and define a view of Self as a racial being that does not depend on the perceived superiority of one racial group over another. One step in that process is the deconstruction of transparency in white decision-making" (p. 629).

Frankenberg helps position the value of the *other* in consideration of whiteness. This would be those who easily can recognize and choose to see the implications of power and privilege, those who are not White. They have repeated access to means of explaining whiteness:

Whiteness, as a set of normative cultural practices, is visible most clearly to those it definitively excludes and those to whom it does violence. Those who are securely housed within its borders do not examine it (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 228).

Efforts to pay attention to the systems of privilege in our lives are difficult because these systems also are rendered invisible through language. "Our language rarely describes privileging but creates categories of oppression, diminishing them as separate and separable." Once those categories are created, our myth of individualism allows us to see only the other as the perpetrator of those oppressions" (Wildman, 1996, p.178). For example: "*White supremacy* is associated with a lunatic fringe, not with the everyday life of well-meaning citizens. *Racism* is defined by whites in terms of specific, discriminatory racist actions by others" (Wildman & Davis, 1996, p. 12). The authors demonstrate how

neither of these definitions encourages people to see themselves collectively in these systems of behavior. The definitions sidestep the power and privilege that the authors see are keeping these systems functioning. The language of the definitions allows one to pull one's self out of the mix and lay the situation on others whose behavior is seen as separate and dysfunctional. "It is difficult to see and talk about how oppression operates when the vocabulary itself makes those power systems invisible" (Wildman & Davis, 1995, as cited in Delgado, 1995, p. 574).

Frankenberg sees invisibility in terms of formlessness: Whiteness "as a cultural space is represented here as amorphous and indescribable, in contrast with a range of other identities marked by race, ethnicity, region, and class...a cultural positioning ...impossible to grasp, shapeless and unnamable...serving simultaneously to eclipse and marginalize others" (1993, pp. 196-7).

The invisibility of whiteness also emerges in what educator Rodriguez calls the everydayness that scientific categorization allows: "One strategic rhetoric of whiteness emerging at the level of everyday discourse attempts to rationalize, understand, and/or 'sell' the category white as simply nothing more than scientific classification." In other words, the social construction of White is set aside. Using science and its typical classification systems, however, "naturalizes the category itself, which is part of the strategy at work here" (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 45).

Nakayama and Krizek add:

We see (within this discourse) that whiteness is drained of its history and its social status; once again it becomes invisible...By referencing whiteness through science, the historical and experiential knowledge of whiteness is hidden beneath a scientific category....By conceptualizing white as natural, rather than cultural, this view of whiteness eludes any recognition of power relations embedded in this category (1995, p. 300).

Forgetfulness – or never knowing – both the present and the past

McIntosh admits, even after writing her famous list of dozens of unearned privileges because of her White skin color (1990), that “her racial socialization was such that she could not recall the privilege and would often forget them even after they were written down” (Bowser & Hunt, p. 20).

Having white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to forget is great, partly because it is unsettling to have to give up an unearned meritocracy. If these things are true, that is, it is not such a free country. One’s life is not what one makes it, many doors open for me through no virtue of my own. (McIntosh, 1995, p. 79).

The *easily forgotten* aspect of White privilege is part of historical perspective as well, or the lack of such perspective. Frankenberg sees the structuring of daily life by race in the present as *almost* the same as that of the past (almost, in the sense that present-day material relations of racism are, at any moment, potentially transformable by collective, if not individual, action). Some Whites might point out that occurrences of history are not their fault, they merely inherited it. But, history shaped the present, “placing them in a range of relationship with people of color that included relative privilege, social distance, explicitly articulated segregation, and local, fragile, and situationally specific forms of quasi-integration” (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 238).

This notion of historical inheritance goes far beyond power and wealth gained through a system of slavery. Lipsitz (1995) cites some of the supposedly race neutral liberal social democratic reforms of the last century as racialized, or reflecting racial bias, in reality. Examples include the Wagner Act during the New Deal, the Social Security Act, the Federal Housing Act, urban renewal programs, and the GI Bill after World War II and its disproportionate benefits for Whites. Lipsitz points out how all of these

legislated public policies had ways of excluding farm workers, domestics or contract laborers, which were predominantly people of color, or including White areas of real estate more than Black areas, or destroying disproportionately more (i.e. public housing) that belonged to those who were not White.

Challenges of dualistic thinking

Whiteness scholars analyzed the dilemmas of dualistic thinking with considerable regularity in their research (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993; Hurtado et al, 1999; Lopez, 1995; Maher & Tetrault, 1998, Wellman, 1977). Within the dualistic discourse, they see how whiteness can by definition have no meaning. Rather, it is a normative space constructed precisely by the way in which it positions other cultures outside its borders. That space of whiteness positions itself at one end of a dualism: the good end.

In thinking about whiteness as ideology, the conceptualization of race as a bipolar construct, with Black and White as the two poles, operated to make all “difference” oppositional in nature. “Black lives could not be normal, but only the obverse or the exception to those of whites -- whether in Faulkner or in The Cosby Show. Also caught in this dualism, the Asian, Filipina and Hispanic students lacked any ‘mirror’ for their identities” (Maher & Tetrault, 1998, p. 155).

Lopez reflects on how Blacks historically have been constructed as lazy, ignorant, lascivious, and criminal. Whites are industrious, knowledgeable, virtuous and law abiding. For each negative characteristic ascribed to people of color, he had little

difficulty determining an equal but opposite and positive characteristic credited to Whites. The dualism or binary nature of the construction presents a challenge.

This relational construction of the content of white identity points towards a programmatic practice of dismantling whiteness as it is currently constituted. Certainly, in a setting in which white identity exists as the superior antonym to the identity of non-whites, elaborating a positive white identity is a dangerous proposition. It ignores the reality that whiteness is already defined almost exclusively in terms of positive attributes (Lopez, 1995, p. 548).

Against this backdrop of non-White cultures as lesser, deviant, or pathological, Frankenberg (1993) worries about another trajectory, particularly among the new abolitionists: conceptualizations of the cultures of people of color as better than the dominant culture, perhaps more natural or more spiritual. These are positive evaluations of a sort, Frankenberg says, but they are equally dualistic.

Some see the focus on whiteness treading dangerously close to essentialist thinking, another example of dualistic approaches. By essentialist, I mean race difference understood in hierarchical term of essential, biological difference. This notion that there is a monolithic racial experience helps maintain a distance from any common appreciation of difference. This distance allows Whites to ignore race and think that the *other* is unnecessarily preoccupied with race (Grillo & Wildman, 1991; Harris, 1990; Levine-Rasky, 2000). These authors also see ways that White identity politics can essentialize whiteness as a static attribute functioning autonomously from social processes.

hooks investigates another challenge of dualistic thinking. She “disturbs the long-held belief that all people naturally desire and find relevant and meaningful the supposed unique knowledge that western culture has to offer. hooks implicitly disrupts... the

embedded belief that Europe and American offer the world some unique source of meaning” (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 50).

hooks takes another tack on dualistic thinking as she talks about how Black people remain silent about representation of whiteness: “As in the old days of racial segregation where black folks learned to wear the mask, many of us pretend to be comfortable in the face of whiteness only to turn our backs and give expression to intense levels of discomfort. Especially talked about is the representation of whiteness as terrorizing” (hooks, 1992, p. 341). The range of emotion from “comfort” to “terror” in the face of whiteness creates a bi-polar trajectory that must, at minimum, be traveling away from any state of reconciliation. In addition, hooks’ way of seeing whiteness as terror “explodes the egotistical, ludicrous, and unfounded belief that whiteness is equated with goodness and blackness with darkness, evil” (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 51).

This form of bipolar thinking that hooks describes tends to exclude any finding of common ground, or the *connections* between different forms of oppression. In a similar dualistic fashion, totally abandoning whiteness, as the new abolitionists prescribe, does not answer the question of what is left (Hardiman, 2002). Further risks of dualism include holding onto an either-or analysis of cultural marginalization in which groups and individuals can only see themselves as either privileged or oppressed (Frankenberg, 1993).

Another problem of dualistic thinking is in the demands for racial and cultural parity, whether in a curriculum or a local government. Scholars lament how this frequently degenerates into efforts to *appreciate diversity*, where this means appreciating those who are designated diverse or different rather than questioning the very system that

constructs margins and a center (Karp & Sammour, 2000; Batts, 1998; Frankenberg, 1993). All of this tends to happen when individuals or movements jump from side to side of received dualisms rather than engaging critically with the dualistic system itself.

Kolchin also sees a troublesome dualism evident in the work of whiteness scholars. At times, whiteness is treated as an artificial construct with no real meaning; at other times it is omnipresent and unchanging. “Race appears as both real and unreal, transitory and permanent, ubiquitous and invisible, everywhere and nowhere, everything and nothing” (2002, p. 160). These challenges of dualistic thinking, and the gap that such thinking leaves across the potential common ground of understanding, are important to my ability to investigate issues of whiteness with my own respondents.

The individual vs. collective approach to dealing with racism

Scholars cite an American culture that nurtures independent thinking and celebrates individualism as important in understanding and unpacking whiteness (McIntosh, 1990; Tatum, 1997). They note psychological blinders to the value of collective approaches; to seeing structural, systemic, societal or institutional views; to valuing what society needs over individual needs. (Carter, 2000; Agar, 1994)

Linguist Agar (1994) suggests that Americans as individualists have trouble understanding another mentality, as much as they have trouble learning other languages, and for related reasons. He believes that Americans as a society that encourages individual achievers have difficulty entering another world, another view, another way of doing things. Agar describes a stereotype of American culture as including the best consciousness around, the best ideas, the most freedom, the most wealth, people who are

capable of doing anything if they just try hard enough. Wellman's (1977) research respondents felt the need to defend the principles of individualism, in part, by opposing collective approaches to healing the racism around them. Others were "committed to the notion that people should be autonomous and independent" (Wellman, p. 232). The challenge rests in collectively realigning a culture that promotes and markets this kind of thinking (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Wellman, 1977), to convince those within to disengage from the dysfunctional aspects of values and beliefs that might otherwise work well for them.

Others also criticize views that reduce racism to individual, intentional acts. Not only does that view distract White people's attention from the results of individual actions, it also evades a much broader range of historical and contemporary processes through which the racial order is maintained (Frankenberg, 1993; Lipsitz, 1995). For them, a commitment to respecting the individual is more likely to work against greater racial equality than for it. For example, the social and collective context for affirmative action programs that seek to remedy years of structural inequality could be overlooked by focusing on promoting expression of the talents and the merit of token individuals of color.

As people continue to use *-ists* (as in sexist, racist) as a way to talk about discriminatory treatment, Delgado feels they individualize the behavior, ignoring the larger system within which the person is situated.

To label an individual a racist conceals that racism can only occur where it is culturally, socially and legally supported. It lays the blame on the individual rather than the forces that have shaped the individual and the society that the individual inhabits. For White people this means that they know they do not want to be labeled racist. They become concerned with how to avoid that label, rather than worrying about systemic racism and how to change it (Delgado, 1995, p. 573).

Scheurich (1993) argues that racism is frequently misunderstood by Whites because of their socially learned investment in individualism and how it eclipses their *racial positionality*. He explains: “Highly educated whites usually think of racism in terms of the overt behaviors of individuals that can be readily identified and labeled. A person who does not behave in these identified ways is not considered to be a racist. Within this perspective, racism is a label for individuals not for social groups.” (Scheurich, as cited in Rains, 1998, 81). Lipsitz refers to the “logic of the language of liberal individualism” which allows Whites to position what they resist (i.e. slavery, White guilt, privilege, ungrateful minorities, White supremacists) with someone else. “They seem to have no knowledge of the disciplined, systemic, and collective group activity that has structured white identities in American history” (Lipsitz, 1995, p. 382).

Rains adds to this line of thinking by explaining that when racism is constructed as individualistic, it is much easier to think that it has no relationship to the vast majority of Whites, inside or outside of the organization.

Undergirding this construction is a logic that alleges individuals who are not engaged in overtly racist behaviors are not racist. Comments made about racists or racism simply do not pertain to them. Such a construction of racism as overt, individualistic behavior provides a cloak of immunity from scrutiny. Immunity carries with it a certain power, for being immune means not having to be mindful of that from which one is exempt. The complicity in racism that privilege provides remains nameless and unnoticed (Rains, 1998, p. 81).

Moving forward: Beyond identification to development

For some whiteness analysts, the solution to the challenges of racism begins in the simple effort to write and to expose (Brown, 1997; Delgado et al, 1995, 1997, 2000).

Critical race theorists write from a position of subjectivity, as we are on a mission to expose a pretense of objectivity. ...As we argue that our realities have been left out of

their stories, do we not then have some responsibility to make sure their realities are not left out of ours?"... We must strive to forge communicative understanding, a shared discourse in which marginalized voices are not only aired but heard (Brown, 1997, p. 645).

For others, mainly in the field of psychology, moving forward has involved the development of racial identity theory and the stages through which they believe each person must move in developing his or her own maturity about race. These White identity theorists include Carter, Cross, Hardiman, Helms, Holvino, Parham, and others, with several expanding on the initial work of Helms and Hardiman. For Helms, "The development of white identity in the United States is closely intertwined with the development and progress of racism in this country. The greater the extent that racism exists and is denied, the less possible it is to develop a positive white identity" (1990, p. 4).

In a summary of White racial identity models, Helms (1990) cites Carney and Kahn (1984), Ganter (1977), Gaertner (1976), Hardiman (1979), Jones (1972), Kovel (1970), Terry (1977), and her own earlier efforts in 1984. For the most part, Helms says that earlier models or theories focused on defining racism. They were fueled by the "implicit assumption that racism was only damaging to the victims of the resulting oppression but did not consider their effects on the beneficiaries or perpetrators of racism" (1990, p. 50). Helms' research on the stages of White racial identity development will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

Looking back across all of the characteristics of whiteness that have been discussed in this review, one in particular stood out in the literature. Dualistic or binary thinking, especially as it applies to the individual and the collective, bordered on the

habitual, and seemed important to a study of women who were White. The dualism or binary nature needed to be recognized and named in its pervasiveness and polarizing effects, even as they might affect leadership abilities. This review suggests the importance of setting aside dualistic tendencies and examining what remains.

Many of the writings refocus discussion of racism from the inadequacies of *others* or from the race/d relations between *us* and *them* to whiteness itself. In addition to those cited in this paper, others include Sleeter, 1993, 1995, 1996; Fine et al, 1997; Giroux, 1997. From this vantage point, scholars see the task of a “systematic, rigorous, critical problematization of whiteness as the active participant in systems of domination as distinct from studying racial difference as the effect of such processes” (Levine-Rasky, 2000, p. 272).

Rather than suppressing the themes that have been discussed in this review because they are messy and distracting impediments in advancing the interrogation of whiteness, Levine-Rasky argues that they should be integrated into the endeavor. “Double binds and affect reveal interstices through which contradictions of whiteness appear. These interstices may be exploited in a systematic exploration of how whiteness works” (Levine-Rasky, 2000, p. 284).

This approach takes the emphasis off individual White bodies as they negotiate what she sees as the day-to-day fears and double binds of whiteness. Other authors also remove the emphasis, but not without also stressing the importance of admitting the inescapability of racism:

Often when white privilege is being discussed, the focus is either at the theoretical level or at the broader social level (Dalton 1995, Feagin and Vera 1995, Roman 1993). The personal level may be more difficult and challenging to examine for it threatens to be too direct and to infringe on that which is held more sacred, confidential, and

private. Yet by examining the personal level of how white privilege functions, often a more concrete and practical understanding can be gained (Cruz 1995, McIntosh 1995). (Rains, 1998, p. 83).

hooks reminds us that an open mind and a liberal way of identifying for Whites is, at best, only the beginning of a process of unworking White supremacist thinking and behavior. By itself, this mindset does not provide the kind of vigilance necessary to see the impact of some behaviors. In some cases, a liberal mindset can mask the need for that vigilance.

When liberal whites fail to understand how they can and/or do embody white-supremacist values and beliefs even though they may not embrace racism as prejudice or domination (especially domination that involves coercive control), they cannot recognize the ways their actions support and affirm the very structure of racist domination and oppression that they profess to wish to see eradicated (hooks, 1989, p. 113).

Wildman also holds to the inevitability of racist behavior. She stresses the need to confront racism and a larger sense of pervasive White supremacy openly before Whites can move to remedial work:

I simply believe that no matter how hard I work at not being racist, I still am.... Because part of racism is systemic, I benefit from the privilege that I am struggling to see. Whites do not look at the world through a filter of racial awareness.... The power to ignore race, when white is the race, is a privilege, a societal advantage. The term *racism/white supremacy* emphasizes the link between discriminatory racism and the privilege held by whites to ignore their own race. All whites are racist in this use of the term, because we benefit from systemic white privilege (Wildman & Davis, 1996, p. 20).

In spite of the confidence of these authors in making a difficult statement about themselves, they assert that Whites generally think of racism as voluntary, intentional conduct, done by horrible others. Whites spend a lot of time trying to convince themselves and each other that they are not racist. A big step, the authors say, would be to

admit that we are racist and then consider what to do about it. Mazie and others experienced a breakthrough in their educational efforts when they began to see race as a verb and not a noun. “We defined ‘racing’ as something we actively do to categorize ourselves and other people within racial norm, social expectations, and laws” (Mazie et al, 1993, p. 286). These scholars also recounted the ongoing struggle to avoid the seductiveness of guilt, “a no-action, feel-good response to feeling implicated in the actions of other Whites, a response that avoided responsibility for change” (Mazie et al, 1993, p. 291).

Without such an admission Levine-Rasky believes that encouragement of a critical study of the contexts in which members have come to enact their White privilege, identity, and ethnicity can be an escape from the more difficult individual work. Still, she and others support this larger contextual emphasis. She believes it “shifts the discourse, the culture, the structures, the mechanisms, the processes, the social relations of whiteness that produce racialized subjects including whites. ... The transposition is one from conceptualizing whiteness psychologically to conceptualizing whiteness socially” (Levine-Rasky, 2000, p. 285). Yudice (1995) follows a similar line when he argues against a whiteness approach that points out problems of White people when organizations that structure the significance of whiteness are left undisturbed.

Ultimately, however, perhaps at the risk of delivering Whites from a complicity with racism, authors (Ellsworth, 1997; Levine-Rasky, 2000; McIntosh, 1990, 1995, etc.) reinforce the value of the tension that must remain in looking at whiteness from the full range of both perspectives. Because whiteness or any other social construction changes and develops, maybe we will never capture it theoretically. Maybe in alliance with the

race traitors and new abolitionists, the actions of Whites must set the example for scholarly endeavors by repeatedly separating skin color from political identity, until the act becomes natural (Flores & Moon, 2002). Maybe we live knowing that the models, stages, theory and analysis of scholars reflect only the ideal, that they can never fully resolve the moral and ethical injustice that floats a system of White privilege. “That does not mean, however, that we are free to stop trying” (Winant, 1999, p. 23).

Summary and Reflection

This review begins with a tracking of the historical and chronological development of the field of whiteness studies, with a close eye to scholarly definitions of the term whiteness. Some of the more frequently investigated characteristics of the social construction of whiteness are then considered. Many of those characteristics double as some of the tougher challenges for scholars exploring the field.

Examples of those characteristics include the invisibility or transparency of whiteness, its changing meanings and the dilemmas of maintaining race as a social construct. Other examples: an ease of those who are White in forgetting what White means, or seeing White in dimensions that always include other identities (i.e. gender, class) and that are never the same for any two people.

Most scholars reviewed for this paper report that all of these characteristics flow from the power and privilege that support the functioning of whiteness in U.S. society. Many writers were forthcoming about connections between their scholarly efforts and the goal of creating a more humane social order (Kolchin, 2002).

On reflection, I learned that when I name something, the word draws my attention to it, which increases the chances of noticing it as something significant. Whiteness studies names whiteness as a somewhat lost and discredited word that we can re-learn to use to make sense of the truth of what's going on in society.

I discovered that whiteness studies can be grouped thematically, which was one of the outcomes of this paper, and one of my evolving goals as I researched the material. I learned that the study of whiteness is rich with multiracial and multigendered scholarly perspective in ways that build my hope in academia. I've learned that whiteness studies, as the field evolves within the borders of the United States, draws interest from scholars outside of our borders.

This research reminded me of how much power and privilege provide choice, often invisible: to avoid, to learn, to resist, to name. I learned that my whiteness is a form of privilege, no matter how powerless I might choose to feel. The belief that my whiteness gives me access to choice, and to privileges that I assume are generally available to all, is not new. What has been revealed are added ways of seeing this access systemically, and the recognition of how the power is nourished. I am also far more sensitive to how I contribute to that exercise of privilege at the expense of others, often without ever realizing it.

The learning is difficult. The resistance is strong. The habits are entrenched. This digging and turning over of concepts of whiteness studies has brought me academic alliances that I didn't know were present. The research gives me reinforcement as I build on my learning and find ways to share the learning with others.

A deeper understanding of the effects of my whiteness transforms my ability as a learner, if I choose. The work of those who have explored whiteness studies has broadened the horizons of my understanding of racial diversity and overall constructs of race. The privilege of my whiteness leaves me a choice of how to fill that broadened realm, or whether to fill it. The image in the mirror may not be as attractive now, but the research has also changed the definition of attractive. The reflection has become more detailed and humane and certainly more socially connected and alive. I am more driven now to ask, in discussion with others, as I react to points about race, what makes me think that I am White and what does it mean? What makes others think that?

Two final themes emerged for me in efforts to looking ahead in the literature, and to investigate the issue of White women leaders. One theme involved the challenges of dualistic thinking. A second and related theme was the individual vs. collective ways of approaching whiteness issues. These themes invited interesting reformulations, or dismantling for some, of whiteness. Along with the work of the White identity theorists, issues of dualism and individualism seemed to shed the most light on the emotional binds and the ethical and social justice implications that face the study of whiteness in every piece of literature reviewed.

This section of the chapter has presented an overview of the literature in whiteness studies. The next section extends the literature review and analysis to one particular model of White identity formation.

White racial identity in theory: The Helms approach

This section looks closely at the development of White racial identity formation through a review of the literature surrounding the work of Dr. Janet Helms. I will explain her theory of White racial identity and its importance and relevance to the growing field of research on whiteness, as well as implications of her work, key criticisms and limitations. I discuss a system of measurement that Helms and fellow researchers have developed. This effort to measure racial identity development has been described as one of the most operationalized and most influential in the literature (Meyer-Lee, 1995), and is not without published criticism and rebuttal. Such criticism focuses primarily on the complexity of measuring attitudes rather than behavior, and correspondingly on identity statuses as measurable locales or situations, rather than elements of a progression.

Janet Helms is an African-American psychologist, theorist, institute founder and director, and a university professor. A native of Kansas City, she has developed and shared her expertise in academic communities that range from Iowa to Maryland to Massachusetts. She developed a theory of White racial identity in 1984. Her work has spawned a growing realm of books, courses, conferences, critics, websites and a functioning institute.

As a counseling psychologist, Helms took a particular interest in the question of how the race of the participants influences the counseling process. She looked at 30 years of literature prior to 1984 and came to the conclusion that such writing perpetuated a one-sided cultural analysis (1984). The *problem* always seemed to be the minority clients' cultural adaptations. The *solution* was that the White counselor needed to either understand the other culture or avoid such counseling situations. The models she found

always seemed to minimize the variability of the counselor's cultural adaptations. She believed that the explanation for the counseling dynamics might well lie as much in the counselors' manner of resolving their own cultural and racial issues. This thinking drove the formation of her White identity model.

In her early work, Helms found that no theory existed to explain how Whites develop attitudes about their own racial group. They inferred their social adaptability from racial attitudes and/or prejudice toward other groups. One problem with using prejudice to define White attitudes was "it provides no information about how Whites feel about themselves as racial beings" (Helms, 1984, p.155). Helms believed that this denial permitted Whites to avoid taking personal responsibility for perpetuating a racist system. Ask a White person what she or he is racially, Helms notes, and you might get an answer along the lines of Italian, English, German, Catholic or Jewish. She operated on the notion that White can mean little to a White person as a label. Whites also don't see themselves, or choose to see themselves, as White.

Because Whites are the dominant group, as defined by power and privilege in this country, Helms believes they can choose the environments "that permit them to remain fixated at a particular stage of racial consciousness" (Helms, 1984, p. 155). Further, since Whites usually have the freedom to leave an arena in which their racial attitudes might be challenged, "each stage can culminate in either a positive or negative resolution" (Helms, 1984, p. 155). Dominant, or dominance, in this situation means in population numbers, in possession of material wealth and/or in accumulation of social power.

For theoretical and measurement purposes, Helms assumes that we all contrast ourselves to a group that we feel is different. She also assumes that lower status socioracial groups generally contrast themselves against Whites, and Whites generally contrast themselves against Blacks (Helms, 1990, 1993, 1996). Even the ongoing use of the terms black and white as contrasting colors seems to bear her out. Literally and chromatically, dictionaries define these colors as opposing, bearing the least resemblance to each other, one of least lightness, one of most lightness. This recognition plays into the first theme of Helms' racial identity work. Those themes follow here:

a) one's racial identity develops in comparison to one's contrast racial group; b) healthy identity development involves the abandonment of societal impositions of racial-self in favor of one's own personally relevant self-definition; c) members of all of the socioracial groups develop racial identity by means of a sequential process in which increasingly more sophisticated differentiations of the ego evolve from earlier or less mature statuses; and d) qualitative differences in expression of racial identity statuses can be measured, but development must be inferred from responses to measures (Helms, 1996, p. 155).

If one is a member of a dominant group, Helm's believes that one's most important racial identity issues are to:

a) overcome the entitled stereotyping associate with membership in the White group, and b) learn to appreciate one's group and oneself as a member of the White socioracial group without colluding with other group members in commandeering societal resources (Helms, 1996, p. 160).

She acknowledges that a White person likely doesn't have to acknowledge an identity as a member of a dominant group unless that person finds her/himself in a situation that poses a challenge to that status. If one doesn't often have to acknowledge such an identity, s/he is likely to interpret racial stimuli more simplistically than those who are in non-dominant groups. She also adds that White individuals who can process

and respond to her more complex statuses, which are described below, are less likely to do so unless they have other White persons in their environment who can do the same.

Helms first asserted in 1984 that Whites work their way into and through five possible stages for interpreting and responding to racial cues. She now calls them statuses and has increased the number to six. As a progressive listing from racism to a positive consciousness of whiteness, those statuses are contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy. The description that follows is drawn from numerous writings on the subject (Carter, 1995; Carter, Helms & Juby, 2004; Helms, 1984, 1990, 1995, 1996, 1999). Each description ends with a sample manifestation of that status.

Helms' theory begins with a stage of **contact** characterized by one who has difficulty thinking of herself or himself as White, and even sees color-blind attitudes as positive attributes. It involves a denial of the meaningfulness of race in one's life and in society in general. This status describes those who accept societally imposed racial characterizations and rules for dispensing societal resources. Contact can also be seen as obliviousness to racial information, and as avoiding the interpretation of such information. Information processing strategies (ISPs) might include denial, obliviousness, naiveté. Samples of what someone in this status might say include: "I wish I had a Black friend." Or "You don't act like a Black person." Or "I don't notice what race a Black person is."

The status of **disintegration** is a first acknowledgment of the value of being White, and can be characterized by disorientation and confusion. Racial stimuli can bring about paradoxical responses. This confusion can center on some of the often unspoken or

rarely discussed rules of White socialization. This status is not unlike that of a state of “incongruence” for Rogers (1951), which is the emotional discomfort of having to alter one’s real self to be accepted by significant others in one’s life, or Mezirow’s (2000) “disorienting dilemma” that can lead to perspective transformation. The confusion can also concern one’s racial group commitment and ambivalent racial self-definition. ISPs might include disorientation and suppression. Sample language could be: “I don’t feel I have the social skills to interact with Black people effectively.” Or “I believe each person should be treated according to her individual merits, but I don’t know Blacks well enough to do that.”

Reintegration describes the maintenance of White identity by increasing White privilege, often with a displaced anger and hostility toward people of color. It is defined by a belief in the innate superiority of White people and oneself as a member of the White group. Those within this status might champion their own group-entitlement. Reintegration can be characterized by dichotomized thinking, which means the White group is idealized while other racial groups are devalued. Passive reintegration means removing oneself or avoiding environments where one might encounter Blacks. Any discussion about racial matters would then likely involve same-race peers who share similar views. ISPs might include minimization, selective perception, and out-group distortion. Samples might be: “I get angry when I think about how Whites have been treated by Blacks.” Or “I know life is not fair, but I’ve earned what little I have. Some people have only been given theirs.”

Pseudo-independence develops as an intellectual awareness or liberalism that deals, at least verbally, with the privileges of being a member of the White group. It is an

intellectual acknowledgment of racial grouping, along with an emotional guilt and a need to help the less fortunate become more like Whites. Pseudo-independent persons might try to submerge the upsetting feelings about whiteness that were aroused in the previous statuses. In other words, pseudo-independence can be a rationalized commitment to one's own racial group and of ostensible liberalism toward other groups as one begins to acknowledge the responsibility of Whites for racism. It is a good-bad dichotomization of racial groups. Pseudo-independence imposes one's own group standards as a condition for acceptance. The White person still searches outwardly for Blacks to explain racism and looks to Black cultural dysfunctionality to explain it. A person at this status might seek greater interaction with Blacks, but only to help change them so they function more like Whites and follow White criteria for success and acceptability. The White person still isn't recognizing that such criteria might be inappropriate or too narrowly defined. ISPs include rationalization and selective perception. Samples might include: "I feel as comfortable around Blacks as I do around Whites." Or "It means a lot to me to be able to help out Black folks."

In 1990, Helms proposed a sixth status of **immersion/emersion** in which one who is White begins an active exploration of what it means to be White. She places it just before a status of autonomy. Helms reflects Hardiman's (1979) contention that it is necessary for Whites to seek information about their historical, political and cultural contributions to the world, and that such a process of self-examination is important to helping define a positive White identity. At the status of immersion/emersion, a White person is developing a need to understand her or his own role in perpetuating racism. People might immerse themselves in stories of Whites who have made similar identity

journeys. They might participate in White consciousness-raising groups that explore individual self-interest in abandoning racism. This status allows questioning, analysis, and comparison of racial group status relative to other groups. This is the beginning of a positive White identity that is *also* anti-racist. This status moves beyond the *I am not a racist* mantra with a commitment to what will now complete the *I am...* sentence. The challenge of this stage is to develop a pride and an emotional acceptance of one's race without being racist. ISPs include hyper vigilance, probing and analyzing. Samples: "I am making a special effort to understand the significance of being White." Or "Who am I racially?" Or "Who do I want to be, and who are you?"

Autonomy is a real valuing of diversity and an outright seeking of opportunity for diversity in one's life. It is actively seeking opportunities to learn from other cultural groups and incorporating that learning in one's attitudes and behavior. It is a nonracist identification with the White group. In other words, the person can recognize that they no longer fall back on old needs or habits of idealizing a race or oppressing or denigrating others racially. Autonomy is pluralistic, and allows for flexible interpretation of racial stimuli. It is a self-affirming commitment to one's societally assigned racial group. Autonomy accommodates flexible standards for perceiving other racial group members. ISPs include integrating and intellectualizing. Samples: "I must involve myself in causes regardless of the race of the people involved in them." Or "I came to this conclusion because of a perspective on my race that I didn't have before."

The theory was further developed into measurable attitudes, which were later called schemas (Helms & Carter, 1990). Helms uses schema to refer to the "observable (and therefore, measurable) manifestations of statuses. Thus, her existing measures of

racial identity can potentially assess schema, but not statuses (or stages)" (Helms, 1996, p. 155). She considers that the racial identity development process is the evolution of statuses. The expression of one's racial identity is racial identity schema. So statuses and schema, while related, are not synonymous.

Helms has also developed a theory of Black racial identity statuses and believes that the processes are similar for each. Regardless of the person's sociorace, a term she uses to emphasize the socially defined nature of the word race,

the capacity to respond to racial stimuli in one's environment involves multiple intrapsychic processes that differ in the complexity of reactions to racial environmental catalysts they can generate. The process within the United States is 'universal' because racial classification is omnipresent in this country, but aspects of the content of the process may be unique.... Moreover, content may change as society changes its manner of socializing racial groups, but the process of developing racial identity should persist as long as socioracial groups are differentially valued by the society (Helms, 1996, p. 159).

Theory measurement tools: Explanation and analysis

Most efforts to measure racial identity originally focused on Blacks (Atkinson, 1989; Burlew & Smith, 1991; Cross, 1971; Parham & Helms, 1989, 1985, 1981). Much of Helms' efforts to develop a model of White identity development descend directly from their approaches. Using a Likert scale, respondents react to racial information about themselves related to their racial group. They also react to information about a relevant contrast group. The scores that emerge reflect the strengths of usage of certain schemas. Her tool for measuring schemas is known as the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS), which she developed with Carter (Helms, 1990). A copy of the questionnaire used in the scale may be found in Appendix B.

The difficulty of determining a measure of racial identity would be easier, Helms admits, if a clear concept existed of what is meant by racial identity. She also cites the complexity of measuring *processes* of identity as distinguished from *outcomes* (Helms, 1996). When she looks at processes, Helms recognizes that she is using data drawn from expressions of attitude. She is admittedly not dealing with action or behavior that may have resulted from such attitude. Therefore, she is careful not to profess that she is measuring outcomes.

Helms and others, including critics, have continued to propose strategies for increasing the value and acceptability of such identity measures (Behrens, 1997; Carter, 1995; Hardiman, 2002). Much of this work includes an effort to further define the concepts. This energy has been broadly felt in many academic arenas and organizational environments, including the field of whiteness studies and its implications for historical, sociological, legal and psychological research. More specifically, Helms measurement efforts have been incorporated into the discussion around the value of standardized testing and cross-racial relationships (Helms, 1984, 1990, 1996B, 2002; Parham & Helms, 1981, 1985, 1985B).

Criticisms, limitations and questions

Criticism of Helms' theory, and she offers some herself, centers on its measurement capacity, particularly on research that treats racial identity scales as if they were intended to be linear measures. These attempts to define racial identity schemas or statuses and discrete elements that develop in a linear fashion have been seen as problematic (Behrens, 1997; Behrens & Rowe, 1997). Behrens wrote that the WRIAS has

a more “parsimonious structure” than the model of White identity proposes (Behrens, 1997, p. 10). He believed that its characterization as a measure of multiple dimensions of White racial identity was not yet supported. Helms and others subsequently called for a use of White racial identity profiles, rather than a linear progression, in research measurement. Their new profile method was used (Carter, Helms & Juby, 2004) to group participants according to the relationship between scales determined for each person in a sample.

Another criticism or shortcoming of the theory is that beliefs and attitudes are not the same as behavior. The WRIAS looks only at expressed attitudes. Helms and Carter also “suspect that the examination of racial identity at the individual level as opposed to the sample mean score level yields a different picture” (*Ibid*, p. 13).

Helms herself (1996) warns that one cannot conclude that any particular sample of race-related behavior will reveal all of the statuses that might be available to one person. That sample also may not demonstrate what is governing one’s behavior. She warns that measures of each schema should include multiple samples of the behavior intended to help determine consistency of the person’s response.

She also advises about how statuses can differentiate within individuals. She proposes that the rate of that differentiation is determined by each person’s “own level of cognitive-affective maturity in combination with the amount and quality of his or her race-related socialization (Helms, 1984; 1996, p. 158). She acknowledges that these aspects of racial identity may cause problems when one relies on group-level measurement principles and does not adjust for person-level characteristics.

Lastly, Helms worries about the tendency of researchers who are accustomed to interpreting summary test scores as signs of some trait rather than as samples of the person's mental structures or organizational process. "When one entertains sampling as an option for explaining individuals' reactions to racial identity items, then a wide array of methodologies become candidates for developing and interpreting measures (Helms, 1996, p. 186).

The testing of Helms model has raised indicators of its limitations. For example, measures of the contact status level have been significantly positively related to their own scale, but not to others. Helms (1996) believes these phenomena may exist because the contact status measures a schema that is qualitatively different from the schema of the other scales. She acknowledges that the contact scale assesses "obliviousness to racial dynamics," whereas the other scales reflect different ways of coping with such dynamics (Helms, 1996, p. 133). Much of the testing, as with a great deal of research, has also been taken from educated, primarily student populations without careful and consistent consideration of their context, historical situation, ethnicity or other identities.

Importance of Helm's theory

This White racial identity model has several aspects that have been reinforced by both time and application. Much of its strength and endurance lies in its flexibility. This includes its approach to relationships, its acceptance of movement that doesn't force a single directional travel through the statuses, and its ability to join status levels to create profiles. The theory recognizes that a great deal influences identity development, and that

attitudes and behavior do not always remain the same, or develop incrementally or even affect each other predictably.

Helms' theory allows one to take a relationship and essentially assess it in its place. In other words, elements of the relationship don't need to be removed and isolated for study. This ability of her theory contrasts with a demand that one gather only indicators of attitudes and assess them in relation to indicators of other individual attitudes. Her theory does not force the researcher to set expectations for the relationship, to force fit its members into proscribed settings.

Helms' model allows movement in both directions through her levels, traveling *up* or *down*, and revisiting levels. The model also allows for interplay, even the joining of status levels. This has been the subject of some of the more recent work of both Helms and her followers (1996; Carter, Helms & Juby, 2004). The model can incorporate evidence of different statuses at different points, changes in statuses, combinations and evolutions that may not appear at all linear.

The model considers that many forces influence White racial identity development. This sensitivity to forces allows an appreciation of the qualitative meaning of relationship. Lastly, the model considers both attitudes and behavior. Stages of identity can shift over time in either direction and can be at different levels simultaneously depending on issues at hand. Development can even retreat in the face of uncertainty or trauma. Also important is the manner in which racial identity statuses may operate together as variables. This possibility has been considered (Carter, Helms & Juby, 2004) in some of the newest research on Helms' theory.

Implications

Helms' ability to set aside certain concepts as weak, and then move ahead to build upon other concepts of greater validity, is a strength that lends a sense of confidence and assuredness to her approach. This is particularly helpful in undoing old and damaging stereotypes. Examples of these concepts include a biological definition of race. They also include the interchangeable use of the terms *racial* and *ethnic*. In effect, she clears a path of weeds and vines so that one might be less likely to trip as she proceeds to lengthen that path toward more realistic interpretations. This standard that she sets lends clarity to her model.

To further explain this path clearing, she sets aside the argument about race that involves gene frequencies and biological phenotypes. Our country's long history of miscegenation is enough evidence for her. She charts her course toward what she describes as a *sociorace*. Further explanation comes in the use of the terms *racial* and *ethnic*. She won't abide a blending of their meaning. She considers *ethnic* characteristics as those willingly chosen, or abandoned or blended into a proverbial American melting pot. Helms stresses that *racial* characteristics do not come with a choice. This clarity allows her to move to the higher value she places on the internalized reaction to being treated as a member of a race. As she shifts up to this level of conceptualization, Helms also moves into the relational realm that seems to have driven her work since its early stages. That realm is evident in the focus she places on outreach and on relationship.

Her focus on outreach comes with the interest generated by her theory and subsequent work, even among those who are drawn in without even knowing what her theory is. The Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture was founded in

2000 at Boston College, under her direction, to promote the assets and address the societal conflicts associated with race and culture in theory and research, mental health practice, education, business, the community and society at large.

Helms focus on relationship comes from an approach to White racial identity from a simple, yet incisive, view of relationships. Her early work was driven by cases involving the relationships of clients and counselors across race.

She stayed in the relational realm as she explained how we all contrast ourselves to a group we feel is different. She cares about what that contrasting action does to us internally when we relate both *across* race and *about* race. She also builds on relationship when she acknowledges Whites who can process and respond to her more complex statuses. She knows how unlikely this will be without the presence, or the relationship of other Whites in their environment who can do the same. In her statuses, especially beyond that of *contact*, she is willing to accept the overlapping and integrating of characteristics that are no doubt fueled by the presence, absence, effect and fluidity of relationships.

In closing, when I consider the value of Helms model, the metaphor of vehicle travel is helpful. Consider that each status is not a parking place, but rather a drop-off and pick-up location. The value of the model rests as much in the travel, the movement from one location to another. One destination plays a role in the experience of the next, but not always in ways considered as improvements or advancement. The sense of advancing is evident, while the reality of retreat is allowed. Helms also realizes that this scenario should be viewed from two perspectives: that which is observed and that which is experienced. The perspective of experience seems to welcome relationships into this

travel metaphor. As we go forward, and quantitative measurement of her model develops in value, this perspective opens important doors on her work from a qualitative research point of view.

These overviews of the literature left me poised to investigate other perceptions and attitudes of those who identify as White. With a research focused on women who also identified as leaders, one additional domain deserved attention: the research on leadership issues among White women. In addition to an exploration of their White identity, I wanted to see the impact of their dual sense of being White and being a leader. That review follows.

White women leaders: A search for scholarly connection

A literature review on leadership could have filled many chapters and, indeed, has filled volumes over the years. An even narrower effort to simply define the term could have supported a literature review of its own. One study turned up 130 definitions of leadership (Burns, 1978), and that was more than 30 years ago. When issues of leadership are narrowed, however, to those involving White women, the paper trail lightens dramatically. A review of that leadership shows that *women* is not the significant delineating term. It is *white*. This is a review of the literature of the past 30 years that includes at least a partial combination of White women, racial identity and leadership.

In narrowing the literature to these areas, search descriptors included the following terms: leader, management, diversity, race, white, identity, whiteness, and women. Each term was used alone as well as in various combinations. Other search

phrases included: women's ways of leading, leadership style, and gender and leadership, with a secondary search for white.

Four general themes began to emerge in the process of this review. I describe these themes as dualism, White without content, White racial identity as primary focus, and helpful perspectives on women and leadership. In the third theme, which is closest to my work, issues concerning both White women and leadership were primary in only two publications. The four themes are addressed below.

Dualism

As the availability of research narrowed with the combined focus on *White* and on *women*, one study helped me understand part of the reason. Hooijberg & DiTomaso (1996) found that diversity-oriented literature tends to compare the personal characteristics and values of leaders in a dualistic fashion. This occurred among three primary categories: men vs. women, Whites vs. non-Whites (both female and male), US vs. non-US managers. This dualism rules out the White and women pairing that I have chosen to study.

Other leadership research involving White women followed a similar dualistic pattern as White women were not only compared to an *other*, as in women of color, but also through added variables that included experience, relationships, and leadership style. White was simply set aside. Several examples follow.

Martin (1993) considered Black and White women presidents in higher education institutions. While this research examined the self-perceived leadership styles of White women (and Black), and found no differences with respect to primary leadership style, it

did not cite racial identity as a key variable. Instead, the variable of years of presidential experience was cited as key to the analysis.

Hartnett (1994) also focused on women college presidents across racial categories. Her emphasis was on the role of relationships on the concept of leadership. Again, the race of the participants was cited, but not listed as a primary variable.

Simmons (1997) looked at the self-perceived leadership styles of Black and White women in administrative programs in community colleges. She also compared styles across multiple races rather than with particular emphasis on White racial identity.

White without content

Some research made reference to White women leaders, but never referenced any investigation into racial identity issues or even the reason for citing White. For example, Bechtloff Watkins (1995) researched variables that affect the employability of White women who are certified as school superintendents. After a reference to White, race was never mentioned again as a factor in the investigation or analysis. Another example is Rosenthal (1998) in a study of determinants of collaborative leadership among committee chairs in all 50 state legislatures. She acknowledges in her report that women of color comprise less than three percent of state legislators. She never mentions whether any women of color are chairs, and never mentions race again. White seemed fully present in her work, but unacknowledged.

White racial identity as primary focus

Although infrequent, whiteness work was not absent in my review of the literature. Much of the work provided a support to my research, yet rarely also included leaders or a sole focus on women. Encouraging examples include McCarthy (1992), who studied White students in a Civil Rights movement course; Sleeter (1992), who studied White teachers in multicultural training, and Pheterson (1986), who studied White women across race in an alliance project.

As part of her doctoral research, Veri (1998) did bring in all three of my domains. She considered studies of race-related issues in sports. None of those studies, she concluded, considered positions of racial privilege in their analyses. Her own research operates from the notion that race is a socio-historical construction. She sought to contribute to whiteness studies with a specific focus on the analysis of race in sports contexts. She interviewed women who held positions of leadership in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I athletic departments. Her work examined how White women negotiate racial constructs while working within sports environments, how they consider themselves in relation to race, and how they view male and female Black Americans in regard to race. This study explored distinctions of White womanhood on the one hand, and White, female constructions of blackness on the other.

Veri's research findings reveal that the participants view race primarily in terms of skin color and culture, but have difficulty viewing themselves as raced; or considering their own racialization as White women. Veri details her findings by describing a "hegemonic discourse" evident in the interviews that:

...reinforces race as a reified, essential category, conceals whiteness as a privileged racial position/identity, conflates race with culture, and infuses blackness with fear,

victimization, and exoticization. The counter-discourses present among these interviews explains race as a labeling device which advantages Whites and disadvantages racially-defined minorities in material, social, political, and cultural ways (p. 1).

Another concept in the literature contributed to my decision to include women in my study who see themselves as leaders by whatever definitions *they* choose. Their definitions address their sense of their own capability as leaders or history of leader-like behavior, and do not necessarily reflect the literature. That concept is the notion of *tempered radicals*. For Meyerson (2001), this term describes leadership behavior of those who at times operate so quietly that they are not noticed as rebels or change agents. They quietly speak up for their personal truths or refuse to silence what makes them different from the majority. Tempered radicals are “cautious and committee catalysts” who operate on a “fault line,” as both insiders who are successful in their work and outsiders with agendas and ideals that are at odds with the dominant culture (Meyerson, 2001, p. 5). Many of those who fit Meyerson’s model are not openly seen as managers or executives.

In Bell and Nkomo’s (2001) study of Black and White female executives, the women in general gave much credit for leadership success to relationships and helpful individuals, far more than to organizational practices. Leadership also meant perseverance, “out-spiraling moves” or a willingness to change function or employers to gain upward mobility, and climbing “concrete walls” or breaking “glass ceilings” that were not present for men.

In the last two categories, however, White women leaders showed different characteristics. They were less prepared for the discrimination they would experience.

The authors state that White women's naïveté may have actually helped the White women move past some of the obstacles more successfully. Leadership meant being less outspoken and more willing to acquiesce to the White male-dominated environment. They did not express the same degree of anger or frustration as women leaders of color about sexism in the workplace.

White women were more individualistic in their ways of understanding barriers. A majority was reluctant to label barriers as discrimination. Leadership meant being cautious when they did speak out about discrimination; many believed that speaking out would do their careers more harm than good. Leadership meant believing that one's company was "*gender neutral*...that their individual achievement was proof that gender was not a problem" (Bell & Nkomo, 2001, p. 172).

As for *tempered radicals*, Bell & Nkomo found that these women were change agents who rarely focused on injustice, racial or otherwise. Even with organizational diversity initiatives, White women leaders set their vision higher, "soaring above the painful landscape of racism, sexism, and oppression" (p. 181). Instead of appealing to the deep roots of the problem, as Black women leaders often did, White women focused instead on diversity in a cognitive style, neutralizing the deeper cultural and historical dimensions, ignoring race and gender by going beyond it. In their study, White women could better see themselves fitting into their organization and held a stronger belief in a meritocracy. This meritocracy is based on their assumption that the playing field is equal for all players. As long as the workplace is perceived as fair game, there is less of a driving urge to make changes. Leadership for these White women becomes "how to play

the game artfully and credibly, rather than how to contest the game. From this position, the self rather than the system becomes the target of change" (p. 185).

Knowles & Peng (2005) considered the nature and measurement of White racial identity as an often-neglected individual difference construct. Their work is new reinforcement for my whiteness focus and an indicator of continued research in this area, but did not provide any particular emphasis on gender or on leadership. They were concerned about the slow pace of White racial identity work among personality and social psychologists. "Empirical psychology's stance toward White identity appears to echo the now-criticized sociological view of whiteness as inherently 'invisible,' 'transparent,' or 'unmarked' -- an attribute that, despite its power to shape lives, is seldom noticed by those who possess it" (Knowles & Peng, 2005, p. 2).

The goal of their work was to show that White -- far from being inert -- is a psychologically salient self-categorization worthy of focused study. Using the White Identity Centrality Implicit Association Test as their form of measure, their findings provide insights into the antecedents and cognitive-emotional consequences of identification with the White group.

Scott (1998) looked at creating partnerships for change in two women's organizations. Her perspective helped demonstrate how my respondents might be viewing, or choosing not to view, themselves organizationally. She kept her focus outside of a dualistic comparison to men or male organizational models. White women leading the organizations in Scott's study tended to acknowledge the whiteness of the organizational culture and practices, yet they never talked about their bonds with one

another as racially based. Scott acknowledged these as exclusionary practices and dominant cultural norms that could constitute a racial alliance of White women.

A quote from one board member in Scott's research ties together White identity and leadership issues in a larger organizational sense: "This organization was created by White women, the process was created by White women; if we bring women of color into the organization...but the model doesn't change, it's like, 'Well, are we multicultural or are we a White organization providing services?'" (Scott, 1998, p. 410).

In their work on both racial identity and womanist identity, Parks et al (1996) noted that development of both identities is different for White women. Whereas racial identity development occurs from a position of social power for these women, gender identity is formed from a culturally subordinate position. White women belong to the racially dominant group in this country. As Whites, they must come to terms with their own inherited racist attitudes and with the consequences for themselves and for others of being White in a racist society. Racially, they belong to the dominant (oppressive) group and may engage in the processes of the abandonment of racism and of forging a positive White identity. However, they are also free, as members of the socially powerful race, to withdraw and to stop the process at any point.

On the other hand, when considering gender, White women find themselves in virtually the opposite position in terms of social power. In this case, they are members of the nondominant (oppressed) group. Parks et al note that their attitudes may reflect a societal sexism that depreciates the group of which they are members and values the other (dominant) group. Unlike the situation with race, it is difficult for White women to avoid cross-gender contact with the socially dominant group that could stifle the stimuli

for womanist identity development. In the end, their developmental tasks are not only different from other groups, but possibly conflicting.

Relevant perspectives on women and leadership

Some of the literature on women and on leadership informed theories of whiteness work and White identity development without openly trying. The following examples did not house key elements of my research. Some of this literature never once mentioned women, or White or race. Still, I found the outcomes of these works helpful as knowledge about larger general attitudes that play into work involving race, women and leadership. These attitudes related to issues of difference, dominance, conflict, class, or other aspects of human rights.

Terry (1970), who is credited as one who introduced the idea of White identity, went on to write on “authentic leadership” in 1993. Authentic, he says, quoting Martin (1986) “is captured by the idea of genuineness rather than purity. An authentic compliment is one that succeeds in praising someone, in contrast to a sincere compliment, which need only be intended to express feelings of admiration” (Terry, 1993, p. 109). His authenticity focus appears to align with the intent-vs.-impact component that scholars often use to define racist behavior. When Terry talks about leadership and race, the emphasis is openly on the behavior of Whites. Authentic leadership for Terry lies in Whites’ ability to take responsibility for racism, to accept that we know both the problem and the solution, and to lead beyond the primordial fear we have about the results of doing something to end it.

A similar generic theme guides the work of Argyris (1974, 1982, 2000) He believes a leader must carry on a *different* conversation. “It should be aimed at making the issues more explicit and testing the assumption, evaluations, and attributions related to them” (Argyris, 2000, p. 108). He encourages creating group norms for openness around difficult issues. He also pushes aside the notion that *support* of leaders means remaining quiet or feeling required to protect others. He writes about establishing avenues for negative feedback crafted effectively. “This type of reflection and action...does more to change the culture than the ‘get honest’ pleas by top management to change the culture or the outward-bound programs intended to create trust” (Argyris, 2000, p. 155).

As a bestselling modern-day author on leadership, Burns (1978, 2003) credits cross-cultural research and analysis in popular motives and values as a breakthrough in the field of leadership. At last, he says, this cross-cultural effort “permits us to avoid parochial notions of authority and power and to identify broad patterns of leadership-followership interaction as part of a broader concept of social causation. At last we can hope to close the intellectual gap between the fecund canons of authority and a new and general theory of leadership” (Burns, 1978, p. 26). I failed to find in either of his popular volumes, however, any emphasis on women or whiteness and leadership.

Beyond this broader credit across cultures, others move closer at least to gender issues by comparing female and male traits of leadership.

Riccardi believes “Women work collaboratively rather than hierarchically. Women talk openly about what’s wrong as an opportunity for change, where men might be more political and cautious in order to protect their position and credibility” (Riccardi,

2005, p. 321). Other research also associates women and collaborative styles of leadership. Rosenthal (1998) found these kinds of less-hierarchical and more consensual traits preferable to women. She lists others whose findings support hers: Lunneborg (1990), Rosener (1990), Cantor & Bernay (1992), Helgesen (1990), and Jewell & Whicker (1994). Rosenthal's work also considers scholars who believe that leadership behavior is situational or contingent on organizational factors, a trait not unlike the movement that Helms observed from one racial identity status to another, not necessarily always advancing.

Merrill-Sands & Kolb (2001) cite several studies involving gender differences in their work on women as leaders. In one study by Posner and Kouzes, they note that female leaders were rated higher than men in two areas. Women outperformed in giving feedback and recognizing, rewarding and motivating individuals and teams. Women also excelled at behaviors of acting with integrity, demonstrating competence, organizing and moving projects forward, meeting commitments and milestones, and persevering through problems. In another study by Kabacoff of only senior vice presidents or CEOs, female executives operated with higher energy and intensity and had a greater capacity to keep others involved. The women in this study also set higher expectations for performance than males in the same type of industry, same years of management experience and same organizational level.

Annis (2003) observes that women's leadership characteristics stem from tendencies to bond in conversation, while men bond in games and tasks; women look for areas of agreement and men look for gaps; women are validated in relationship, and men are validated by accomplishments; women share problems in the formative stages as a

way to lead and to gain buy-in, and men share problems after they have been solved; women are multitaskers who switch topics frequently in conversation, and men are linear thinkers who stick to the issue at hand.

Helgesen (2005) sees a desire to focus on long-term sustainability, goals and viability as a primary characteristic of many women leaders (i.e. from nature, rather than nurture). She views these characteristics as responsible for long-term projects like care of children; growing, harvesting and storing crops. She cites the women whistleblowers in the Enron, WorldCom and FBI scandals as modern-day examples of a priority focus on these same characteristics.

Helgesen is making the point that women have often been carriers of long-term values and concerns and

these values have often been identified, by both supporters and opponents, as specifically feminine and nurturing, an extension of women's age-old private-sphere concern with the creation of a stable and welcoming family life. Indeed, among the early feminist industrial reformers, the stated vision was that of making the whole world more homelike. And home is by nature an ideal of sustenance and continuity, rather than one of progress, dynamism, or bold leaps into the void (Helgesen, 2005, p. 375).

Conclusion

In choosing to include material in this literature review on women and leadership with no references to White identity, I needed to remember that even some of my own doctoral research respondents might not identify with whiteness, and they would not be turned away. With that in mind, the normalcy or lack of meaning or lack of recognition of White identity needed to be acknowledged in much of the literature, and not judged. Rather than discount or treat such literature as negative or lacking, capturing the absence

of whiteness perspective could have significance, pushing past its silence and invisibility. Silence *in* the literature noted in this review on the meaning of whiteness or White identity did not justify my silence *about* that literature. Recognition of that silence could, in fact, contribute to its value by inviting visibility and ways to advance its meaning. Recognition of the gap in the literature also indicates what this research can begin to fill.

Attempts to create this review on racial identity issues involving White women leaders was informative, but not necessarily successful, not without sidestepping some of the boundaries of my research design. Very little of the research in this section held to both sides of my efforts to encompass White identity *and* women leaders. Two observations followed this realization that are helpful to my study: First, the theoretical nature of most whiteness work would support the near absence of whiteness perspective in much of the literature. Second, my research efforts hold White women's identity as a primary variable and leadership as secondary. These women are chosen in part because they see themselves as leaders, not because they fit a prescribed model of leadership behavior or experience.

With this review, the need for this package of study involving both women's White identity and leadership grew beyond my own original expectations. This assessment of the literature encouraged the design of my own research to support that packaged theme. The next chapter details the methodology for my study that emerged from this review.

CHAPTER 3

Research methodology

This chapter begins with a general overview of factors that influenced the design of this research. An explanation follows about the methods of data collection. I detail why and how respondents were chosen, field entry, and phases of data gathering and analysis. I then take a closer biographical look at who the respondents were. The chapter concludes with a discussion of some assumptions inherent in this work, as well as advantages and limitations of the design.

Overview

Scholars differ in their theories about what it means to be a member of the White race. Even the U.S. court system has ruled differently on the meaning over the years, as the previous chapter detailed. Practitioners have multiple models for approaching the subject. Few disagree, however, over whether the question about meaning is easy to answer, or to even discuss. To address the question, I considered one specific group: White women who identify as leaders.

I provide a replicable framework for investigating the meaning of whiteness for such a group. This methodology also helps illustrate the impact of that meaning on each

woman's sense of herself as a leader. My design places a high priority on acknowledging assumptions that feed issues of race, both among the respondents, my readers, and myself. I take care to identify assumptions and acknowledge the roles they play.

To answer my research questions, I interviewed and observed 12 women. The women were selected from several dozen who enrolled and completed a workshop on the subjects of women leaders and race in the Boston, MA, area. About half of the overall participant groups identified as White. Further details of this selection process are provided in this chapter. I interviewed these women to elicit stories about their history, race relations, social environment, racial identity development and sense of themselves as leaders. My method included analysis of answers to specific interview questions and their personal accounts, observation and reflection on their behavior during the interviews, and analysis of their written reflections.

In addition to the interviews, I administered the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS), a measurement system of White identity developed primarily by Helms (1995, 1993, 1990, 1984). With written permission from Helms, each member received the WRIAS questionnaire (Appendix B) during our time together. The data from the questionnaire was analyzed both according to Helms' et al system of measurement and in comparison to other information provided during interviews and observations.

The explanation of this research design begins with a discussion about methods. The choices of methodological inquiry raised two basic questions for me: What method best serves the larger professional and academic needs of an audience dealing with racism in the 21st Century? What do I want to better understand?

Why qualitative research?

With a sensitive issue and a study sample of 12 women leaders, my research priorities leaned toward depth and trust of a process over volume and short answers. I needed to hear the *voice* of these individuals in a way that numbers or standardized measures are not designed to provide. I was interested in what whiteness means to women leaders, how it affects them, how they think about it, what they do about it and because of it. I looked for evidence of stages of change in attitudes about racial identity, development of consciousness about race, as well as what gets in the way of that development. I also looked for themes and patterns and what they revealed involving leadership attitudes and behaviors. My collection of each woman's stories was designed to understand and to contribute to the experience of making meaning of whiteness, and the effect of that meaning on ideas of leadership for these women.

A qualitative approach allowed detail perhaps beyond what the individuals involved had ever described, or even experienced (Maxwell, 1996; Seidman, 1998). I saw each woman as collaborator or co-researcher during our time together (Mishler, 1986). This description honors the role they were encouraged to play in stretching their thinking, responding and writing beyond our meetings. I wanted to create situations where the interviewee might also become engaged in a search for meaning. I encouraged each respondent to explore beyond answers that may have come quickly during interview sessions, and to look more deeply for the source of some answers. Such exploration occurred with questions that the respondents were allowed to take with them for deeper reflection between our interview times together. The use of this co-researcher approach also attempted to address and ease any asymmetrical and hierarchical nature of my

presence. I wore two hats in my overall association with these respondents, one as a diversity consultant and the other as student. This collaborative approach was designed to help the respondents see me wear the hat of a student, a researcher gathering data. Although they participated in a workshop that I co-designed and will explain later in this chapter under Research Sample and Design, I wanted an obvious indication that my consultant hat was quite deliberately shelved. The letter of invitation to participate (Appendix C) shows how I explained my role to potential participants.

I noted individual changes in thinking and behaving that occurred among my collaborators as a result of learning during the data-gathering process. Patton (1977, 1998) calls this *process use*. I've seen a history in other research of unsolicited feedback from participants who continue to be moved to communicate after the interview process. I accommodated that feedback and learning in a way that a quantitative process could not allow.

Much of the writing in whiteness studies since the Civil Rights movement has been either theoretical or historical. Many people in my experience have a difficult time relating these notions of whiteness to their everyday experiences. My own research emphasis was driven by the notion that whiteness studies will progress in a very limited fashion without more efforts that ask White people in their everyday worlds what they believe it means to be White. I believe that much of the meaning of White as an unnoticed, normal, and/or invisible trait against the backdrop of other racial categories keeps many people from knowing some important elements of their everyday experiences with race. I believe the effectiveness of this sharing of experiences rested in how the respondents were approached and whether their responses were appreciated and allowed

to evolve or develop through further thinking. These research needs were best met qualitatively.

I did include one quantitative element in my research. This came through the WRIAS, a formal measurement scale of White racial identity. The use of the WRIAS in this study design complimented my qualitative research on several levels. The WRIAS is a consistent form of measurement whose design is free of this researcher's bias, at least in its administration. The design parameters are designated by a pre-set questionnaire and measurement system. The WRIAS allows members of my small research sample to be analyzed in comparison to hundreds of others who have been a part of WRIAS since its measurement efforts were developed over 10 years ago to support a theory that Helms began to develop more than 20 years ago. This scale was an attempt to test her model, which remains the norm of White racial identity work since 1984 when it was introduced.

The strength of Helms' theory for my research comes in the stages (or statuses) she creates. Her representations of various manifestations of prejudice and of White privilege are practical and illustrative. In realistic ways, they help define the meaning of developing identity about one's own race. I wanted to see how my respondents identified within her measurement system. I anticipated that my qualitative data would not be coming from respondents who are well versed and committed to White identity development work, certainly not at level of scholars who have been immersed in the design or implementation or critique of the WRIAS. This scale makes available a depth and comparative breadth of research perspective on my respondents that likely goes beyond both their experience and mine. The scale also offers a third form of articulation of White identity development – beyond that of my respondents, or of my interpretation

of data. My use of the results of the WRIAS is detailed in the section on Process and Analysis.

A tradition in the literature on social science research methods of the past 40 years advocates the use of multiple approaches to research (Denzin, 1989; Jick, 1979; Patton, 2002, among others). Every form of research has its limitations, these scholars believe, and multiple methods are usually needed to mitigate some of those limitations. They use the term triangulation to describe this combination of approaches. While the triangulation can be one of several sources of data, or of investigators, or of multiple theories, I chose triangulation of methods. Advocates believe that triangulation brings about a “more complete, holistic and contextual portrayal” of the situation and people under study (Jick, 1979, p. 603).

With this encouragement, I have several methods: interview data, a measure of identity and written reflections and observations to help me interpret what I was being told. With observation comes information about the affective nature of the respondent, the intensity and the dynamics present during the data gathering process. Such data could not be relayed through the transmission of quantitative numbers or transcription of printed words. Taken in total, these approaches to the research allowed multiple valuable viewpoints that I believe created a richer whole. At minimum, triangulation revealed added meaning in my findings. At best, triangulation contributed to their validity.

Research sample and definition

Three elements of this research have a particular significance as a purposeful sampling, and deserve further explanation. They are candidates for research, leader and White.

Candidates for research. **Respondents** were drawn from a group of women who participated in a specific workshop on building alliances across race for women leaders. I helped design this program in 2004 and continue to co-facilitate its sessions. None of the candidates were total strangers to me. At the same time, I knew none of these women well. No one had been a client or associate; none remain with me in formal arrangements. I did not initiate further contact with them while this research study was in process. Each of these women chose independently to explore racial issues for women leaders. Each had been exposed to the same brief curriculum of study across race, White privilege and collaborative leadership.

Leader. Each participant self-identified as a leader when she enrolled in the workshop. In addition to its title, *Women Leaders and Race: Building Alliances*, the workshop enrollment materials suggest a definition of women leaders:

This workshop is designed for both corporate and nonprofit women organization and board officers, managers, founders and human resource professionals. The sessions will be most valuable for those who want to develop their understanding and expertise in issues of collaborative leadership and strategic alliances across race.

All who enrolled in the workshops would have been exposed to these guidelines and would have made their own decision, without my intervention, about how they conformed. I had no reason to believe that any did not meet these guidelines. As part of

the data-gathering process, I asked for a description of the role(s) that each woman played that gave definition to her sense of being a leader.

White. This was determined by asking for the racial category that respondents designated for themselves among the racial classifications available on the 2000 U.S. Census forms.

My candidate pool consisted of all 20 White women among the nearly 40 women who had completed one of the workshops by the date of this research, which began in late 2005. Each received a letter of invitation (Appendix C). The first 12 who responded affirmatively became the respondent group. Any remaining candidates who agreed to participate were notified that they were alternates. In this design, alternates would become part of the respondent group if any of the initial 12 respondents could not, or chose not to complete the research during the two-month time period. The alternates were never needed. All of the women lived in the Boston area during the time of the workshop and during this research. Neither the workshop nor my research placed limitations on the age of the women, their experience, or their occupation.

Event	Date or Time Frame	Activity	Duration
Historical data questionnaire	Dec. 26, 2005-Jan. 9, 2006	Delivered and completed in advance of first interview	Estimated 10-20 minutes
First meeting	Jan. 9-20, 2006	Section A interview protocol Observation Retrospective reflection	60 minutes Ongoing 1-10 minutes
Second meeting	Feb. 8-22, 2006	WRIAS questionnaire	30 minutes
		Section B interview protocol	60 minutes
		Observation Retrospective reflection	Ongoing 1-10 minutes

Table 3.1. Components of the sessions of data gathering process. Levels of this design operated in tandem with each other in the actual research process

Data gathering

As each candidate for research accepted her role as respondent late in 2005, I contacted her by phone to explain the information gathering process. I told each respondent about a brief historical data questionnaire that would be emailed to her (Appendix D). This was to be completed in advance and mailed back to me before our first of two meetings over the course of two months. We discussed questions about logistics, clarity of my research goals, and scheduled a 1½-hour first meeting time.

The research tools for our two face-to-face meetings included an interview protocol, audio recordings, written answers, and journal entries. Each of the two interviews occurred with respondents individually in an audio-taped, long format (Seidman, 1998).

Our first interview explored implications of race and being a member of a race. See Appendix E, Section A. The interview protocol assumed that the respondent's family would be the first transmitter of culture and an environment for the development of identity. I requested stories about experiences with race and about identifying as White. During the interview session, the respondent was encouraged to take specific questions home to provide more in-depth written or taped responses.

I was attentive to attitudes expressed, assumptions made and recollections of behavior. The protocol questions remained consistent for each respondent interview. The protocol also was careful not to mention the more indigenous concept of *whiteness* by name more than once. Instead, I often relied on terms that described whiteness, such as being White, or being a member of a race. Like a new word in the language, my intent was to introduce the concept of whiteness through commonly understood phrases that would help its meaning become more ingrained for increased use in the second interview.

At the conclusion of our first meeting, I gathered data through a second questionnaire using the WRIAS (Appendix B). The data from the questionnaire was analyzed according to Helm's scales of measurement of racial identity development.

The second interview, 4-5 weeks later, involved a more race-specific focus on how the awareness of a racial identity affected how they think, make decisions and lead. See Appendix E, Section B. My inquiry probed how their sense of racial consciousness affected their leadership. Conversely, how their leadership affected their racial consciousness about being White. This interview also explored change for them and commitments to further development, in particular as development related to Helms stages of White racial identity. Questions focused on any history of social justice, activist

or racial influences, and relationships across race that helped to shape who each was as a White woman. Questions were open-ended with encouragement to share answers as stories. This included elaboration on questions that were asked. I took time to insure that any issues that participants thought were important were addressed.

The design of these initial questions reflected particular emphasis on three general categories of data gathering: History and environment, race relations and racial identity development, and leadership. Each of the questions relates to at least one of these categories. That relationship is detailed in a table format in Appendix F.

I gave high priority to an empathic stance of interviewing. This meant trying to understand without judgment and assessing the challenges of doing so. Sensitivity and respect were important to my method. At the same time, I treated the interview protocol seriously and made efforts to help respondents remain mindful of it as well. For example, I would remind a respondent of the original question when a reply traveled to other subjects. I would ask for specific stories if they engaged in only generalities. I might request one's own experience when perspectives only about others had been offered. One last priority remained throughout: my own mindfulness of my presence as a White woman leader, and as an observer and student of this research, setting aside my role as a consultant or trainer.

I respect the personal and intimate nature of issues of race. I provided anonymity, yet I believed that these issues might remain uncomfortable and often difficult to discuss. They might rarely, if ever, have been discussed in the kind of detail that I encouraged. In some situations, I was asking these respondents for a shift from a mindset as uninvolved spectator to that of participant in a process in quite unfamiliar ways. In other situations,

respondents may have already embarked on this shift, and my research picked up on that experience.

From the beginning, the protocol included invitations to think away from the formal interviews and then to write or record stories. For retrospective reflection, participants were encouraged at the first session to make notes or to keep a journal. At the second interview, they were also encouraged to tell stories and share further thoughts that came to mind outside of our interview sessions. Respondents were offered interview protocol questions to answer on their own time, if they chose. “A question may more usefully be thought of as part of a circular process through which its meaning and that of its answer are created in the discourse between interviewer and respondent as they try to make continuing sense of what they are saying to each other” (Mishler, 1986, p. 53-54). Observations were recorded in notes that I made immediately after each interview. Additional notes of observation were made during the transcription process as I listened to the audio tapes. These observations and accompanying field notes were triangulated with data from the historical questionnaire, the interviews themselves as well as analysis of the journaling and the WRIAS results.

Process and analysis

I was mindful of *problematic moments, epiphanies, meaning of leadership roles,* and the *correlation of WRIAS results with interview data.* I looked for evidence of themes of whiteness behavior as well as indigenous themes or those from the participants not reflected in the literature. The process of analysis for this work is described below.

Data was organized into a case record using elements of thick description (Patton, 2002). I recorded attitudes expressed, assumptions made and recollections of behavior. I looked across sets of data from all of the women I researched for common themes and important contrasts. I watched for *existentially problematic moments or epiphanies* (Denzin, 1989, p. 129), or *disorienting dilemmas* (Mezirow, 2000), or *critical incidents* (Brookfield, 1989; Landis, 2004; Patton, 2002; Wight, 1995). These moments also correlate with indications of the moral dilemmas that set the stage for transition from one WRIAS stage to another (Helms, 1989, 1996, 1999). These moments can be described as transitions on very personal levels, however subtle or dynamic. These authors believe that problematic moments or epiphanies can be major and touch all levels of a person's life. They can be reactions to events that have been going on for a long time. They can also be episodes that might have an immediate effect with meaning that comes later in retrospection and in the reliving of the event. They can also be situations that are completely consciously ignored or passed over until efforts are made to help them become visible.

On an organizational training level, the description of *critical incidents* involving problems of cross-cultural adaptation or misunderstanding has grown into a formal training tool (Landis, 2004; Wight, 1995). In organizational settings, members examine several incidents together to make a point, resolve a situation or evaluate a decision. They engage participants in examining attitudes and behavior critical to their effectiveness. My research closely analyzes the early stages of such a process for these women.

Problematic moments can occur across different races or in discussions about race. In either case, they provide an opportunity to review subtle challenges to discourse

that demonstrate an intersection between espoused values and goals and the talk or action that is occurring. Cumming and Holvino (2003) describe problematic moments as actions or statements that mark a point when the conditions are strongest for someone or some group to realize a new, more productive and deeper conversation. These moments often mark the presence of a theme or collective memory from the analyst's perspective. These moments are often easy to recollect and can be recognized by a point, however brief, when the persons present do not know how to carry on.

Many other patterns and themes of whiteness behavior are being identified and named as whiteness research grows. I analyzed the usefulness and meaning of these themes as well as opportunities to rearticulate and advance them. Frankenberg reminds us that in sharing with interdisciplinary cultural studies, "one must not... presume any kind of stability or transparency in the articulation of a research area of this kind" (2004, p. 106).

Examples of these themes from Frankenberg, 1993; Kivel, 1996; McKinney 2005 and others include *prompted whiteness* in which respondents may not have thought in depth or talked about their whiteness until asked to do so. Also *turning points*, when a White person finds herself in the minority and experiences a reminder that there is social meaning to being White. Another example is *vicarious victimization*, or epiphanal stories of whiteness when one is with a person of color and witnesses differential treatment firsthand. The theme of *color-blindness* asserts that we are all the same under the skin; that, culturally, we are converging; that, materially, we have the same chances in U.S. society.

I also looked for stability and change, *crossings, influences, conflicts, resolution, shifts, progressions* and *recurring elements* involved in development of a racial consciousness among these women leaders. I considered the value or need for development of other categories and manifestations of whiteness, which are defined and reviewed, such as *usable ethnicity, tourist ethnicity, mirrored whiteness* (constructed as a reflection of what it is not) or *supplanted whiteness* (discussing another identity that is more meaningful). McKinney (2005) and others use these manifestations of whiteness to show the choices that can be made about when, how often and whose ethnicity and race Whites can appropriate or construct. *Usable ethnicity*, for example, is a sense of feeling ethnic on holidays or special occasions, but not necessarily a feature of everyday use or in major life decisions. Although not all of these categories deal with race, they do touch on how some White women explained themselves in my work when they have been asked to identify racially

I considered evidence of how women come to terms with difficult situations and how they defined a leader's role. I also looked for how that role is transformed among women whose reactions signal a change from what they might have seen as the norm in earlier experiences. Examples were women whose leadership characteristics are enhanced, who felt emboldened, or who felt clueless, or victimized or powerless, or suddenly forgot how they could lead, when confronted with issues of their race. How was that enhanced leadership or paralyzing factor played out, perhaps even fed by all in the situation? Also, when was it played out? When was a situation, or a relationship, valuable enough to pursue, rather than avoid, because of the challenge of moving into issues of

race? A table in Appendix G details the method used to search for the links, connections and themes that are cited above.

At another stage in life, my respondents might have resembled Gorski's (1998) White male multicultural educators as they explored their own racial identity. The respondents may also have White racial awareness akin to McKinney's (2005) respondents who were young students who had already participated in a college-level class on race and ethnicity. Each came with their own at least initial experience in dealing with that spectator-to-participant request. Unlike the response of some of Frankenberg's (1993) respondents, I dealt with women who had at least begun to recognize the invisibility of White privilege and who may not have felt its "taboo" nature as a topic of discussion to the same degree (Frankenberg, 2004, p. 109).

Assumptions inherent in this research design

The issues that I explored were sensitive and difficult for many reasons. The history of race in this country is a rich and a painful story, both incomplete and heavily edited. Talking about race is risky, and the absence of talk about race has kept the subject thwarted. Most significant for this research were the assumptions that people make and use -- including my own -- to guide our thinking. The following are not hypotheses, but rather attempts to be transparent about the impact on my own thinking. Some of my assumptions are:

White women leaders do have attitudes regarding race of which they may not be aware. Race shapes White women's lives in ways they don't always recognize. Important patterns and themes can be drawn from collecting and analyzing their stories.

The themes that arise from their stories can add to the knowledge both of what it means to identify as White and how that meaning affects their leadership efforts.

One of the privileges of whiteness as a race is, if one chooses, to remain racially invisible, racially unnamed and/or normal and unnoticed. Knowing White privilege intellectually is one kind of experience. Sharing stories and talking in depth about attitudes about one's own whiteness can reveal a much different level of experience with White privilege that is worthy of research.

White women leaders carry with them a concept of their capabilities that affects their experiences. Their attitudes about how they experience race, how they govern their actions around issues of race, and their sense of being leaders all inform each other. In other words, I assume that their concepts of leadership and race interconnect in important ways.

My research covers those who fall in the space *between* two groups: those seen as admired and appreciated for their approach to whiteness (noted anti-racist activists, leaders and scholars), and those seen as negative or destructive (supporters and members of White supremacist efforts). I assume that while most of my candidates for research may not identify with either group, they are involved, often unconsciously, in some facet of the everyday racism that routinely affects the lives of people of color.

The process of remembering, telling stories and writing about being White can be revealing for the respondents involved. The recognition of being White through strategic moments of consciousness becomes meaningful when respondents act on that recognition. Such remembering and recognition continues to contribute to a general understanding and to the scholarly research on issues of race.

Advantages and limitations of this research design and methodology

Each of these women chose independently to explore racial issues for women leaders, for their own reasons. Each self-identified as a woman leader. Each had been exposed to the same brief curriculum of study across race, White privilege and collaborative leadership. Each woman had taken a self-initiated step in their awareness of racial identity in a way that might be less of a pattern and less predictable among a group of total strangers. At the same time, the perspectives of these women in the areas I covered in my interviews were unknown to me before the actual interviews. In that way, they all entered this research as strangers to me. Both the benefits and the challenges of such a candidate pool have been reinforced by other researchers involved in whiteness studies who have determined a data set from people who were not strangers. Examples include Frankenberg, 1993; Gorski, 1998; Helms, 1984; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000; McIntyre, 1997; McKinney, 2005; Meyer-Lee, 1999, and Perry, 2001.

I started from a somewhat more advanced situation in terms of my subjects understanding of whiteness than Frankenberg (1993), for example. She recalled that asking her respondents to understand more about whiteness was, for many, only comprehensible as a White supremacist gesture. Her focus on White women was comprehended as race discrimination. As Frankenberg (2004) shared later, any researcher conceives her/his interview sample by inevitably making decisions about boundaries. She uses examples of class, race, gender, and/or religion. In reflecting on the process of qualitative inquiry in these areas, she shares that “These basic processes are never transparent, never anything other than located, and as a result, directive as much as they are objective in intention and result” (Frankenberg, 2004, p. 107). All of the

respondents knew about the boundaries I set, both through the uniformity of my letter of invitation and my interview protocol. See Appendices A, B and C.

Some of the limitations are quite obvious. This research design looks only at Whites, only at women, only at those who see themselves professionally as leaders, and only at participants who have experienced one form of educational workshop. The skew that is inherent in this purposeful sampling of a group of women serves both as a limitation and a benefit. They are also highly educated, mostly beyond an undergraduate degree; appear to be financially secure; recognized and respected in their various leadership positions, and thus by many definitions, elites. Respondents are not total strangers to me. The common ground within those boundaries provides some constancy because of these limitations. The retrospective recall of these women is a limitation as my sole source of their stories. In other words, I had no way to cross-check to verify truth or accuracy of their recall.

The WRIAS has limitations as a psychometric measure. The annual conference of the Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture at Boston College, which I attended annually during my doctoral studies, was a valuable forum for staying current on the work of scholars who continue to test the WRIAS measure. The characterization of the WRIAS as a measure of multiple dimensions of White racial identity has been questioned (Behrens, 1997). Helms has countered that “his studies might have implications for the construct validity of the WRIAS but not for its convergent or discriminant validity (Helms, 1997, p. 13). Helms has also acknowledged that expression of attitudes, which is what the WRIAS tests, might not be the same as behavior. The WRIAS looks only at expressed attitudes. Helms and Carter also “suspect that the

examination of racial identity at the individual level as opposed to the sample mean score level yields a different picture" (Carter, Helms and Juby, 2004, p. 13).

I acknowledge these limitations, and have not found any theoretical measurement without some form of limitation. I also saw this scale as only one form of my analysis in my work, contributing to and enlightening other results. I also saw value in reviewing this measurement tool as I used it, with a goal of contributing to its refinement in future use.

Conclusion

In choosing this research design and methodology, I knew I would be following an educational experience where issues of race and women's leadership had been explored. Respondents chose to attend the workshop independently of my research. I assumed that if they chose to participate in this study, they were agreeing to address these issues again. Because of some familiarity with these issues, which existed in different ways for each respondent, I was able to push for an adherence to the interview protocol. That adherence did not always occur on its own. Both the protocol and the respondents weathered the process in ways that made the design feel reliable.

No two women defined themselves as leaders, or their leadership traits, in the same way. In addition, they chose to describe their leadership capacities across realms that included their roles in the professional world, in the community, and as parents and partners. This broad range of leading meant the design was well fortified with the *everyday worlds* that I sought to study.

The design was meant to be probing, and the respondents allowed that element of process to occur. The responses were broad, deep and voluminous. They provided a rich backdrop for the analysis of data that occurs in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Findings and Analysis

In designing this research project, I wanted to understand the meaning that White women leaders gave to their sense of leadership when issues of race were involved, and in particular, their own race. What would happen when these members of a dominant culture were asked to turn their focus away from the *other*, and begin to reflect on the role they play as members of a race? How would these women explore the meaning of being a part of a racial group?

Every question I asked brought its own unique reply or stories. Across the pool of individual perspectives and stories, however, were clusters of data that began to reveal patterns and common memory of behaviors.

I analyzed the women's responses through several related models of situational behavior in the education and psychology fields. Those models involved critical incidents (Brookfield, 1989; Landis, 2004; Wight, 1995), disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow, 2000), problematic moments or epiphanies (Denzin, 1989), and WRIAS stages/statuses (Helms, 1989, 1996, 1999). The WRIAS model manifests itself through responses to a series of pre-designed questions and a scoring system. The models are discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3, and are concerned with essentially transitional moments of moral

dilemma. These moments can be very subtle or quite dynamic or just plain confusing. They can occur as challenges to discourse that demonstrate an intersection between espoused values and goals and the talk or action that is occurring. By discourse, I mean the common understandings that were demonstrated in language, social practices and structures that these women used. For simplicity's sake, I refer to any manifestation of these models collectively as *moments*.

I prepared my research design with a sense that I would be dealing with sensitive, emotional subjects in an arena that some of the respondents might be visiting for the first time. I tried to unearth *moments* in my analysis that might reveal a framework of understanding, rather than simply blame, shame or give rise to a sense of guilt, frustration or fear. I sought a deeper level of understanding that might help create a clearer path through the issues of race, both their own and others.

In addition to finding *moments*, I analyze through deconstructing text. This means taking text apart to see what emerges, and whether or to what extent dichotomies, contradictions or similarities appear. This helps make visible what might have been obscured. For me, this is another way of seeing *moments* that are potential crossroads of meaning and knowledge.

This analysis follows a broad timeline of past, present and future. The memory of identity development of each of these women as female, as White, and as a leader came at different times for each woman in the past. As an empirical finding, this development merges into their current concepts. The sense of their future across these three realms emerges both from specific future-oriented questions that I asked and from my assessment of current concepts that might indicate projected behavior in the future. A

reference to *most* respondents means at least eight respondents or two-thirds of the group.

My four key findings in this analysis involve:

- **Early memories of racial difference.** These filtered into two categories involving *situations* or involving *individual relationships*. A correlation developed among those whose comments placed them in the latter category. These respondents also addressed their whiteness significantly.
- **Views of whiteness.** Respondents reacted to questions about their race in four discernible ways. These involved addressing whiteness, not seeing whiteness, dismissing it and avoiding the subject of whiteness or even of race.
- **Leadership and race.** For all respondents, the meaning of themselves as leaders was disrupted or disturbed at times when their race became a consideration. In some cases, leadership traits changed in meaning when issues of race were involved. When the women were asked what gets in their way of efforts involving issues of race, most cited their insufficient leadership ability. Some of the same language used earlier to describe their leadership strengths was absent from their repertoire, or appeared as traits they felt were needed.
- **Adult impact of childhood relationships across race.** The women with significant, meaningful personal relationships across race as young children (several around age five) also showed an appreciation of the comfort zone and the learning they remembered. They recalled a simplicity and normalcy in the relationships, and an enrichment they appreciated, even though not all memories were pleasant or positive. Of all 12 respondents, these same women most frequently and comfortably recalled situations of feeling White, addressed their whiteness and explored situations of

themselves as members of a race. During the interviews, and in reviews of transcriptions, I observed a level of communication and reflection from them that had an important impact on the rest of the interview process.

This chapter will explain how I arrived at these findings through the data presented by these women. Two diagrams below help condense that analysis. The first figure demonstrates the predominant flow of the findings of this research, using terms that will be explained and used extensively in the analysis. The data support a general categorization and direction that appears here.

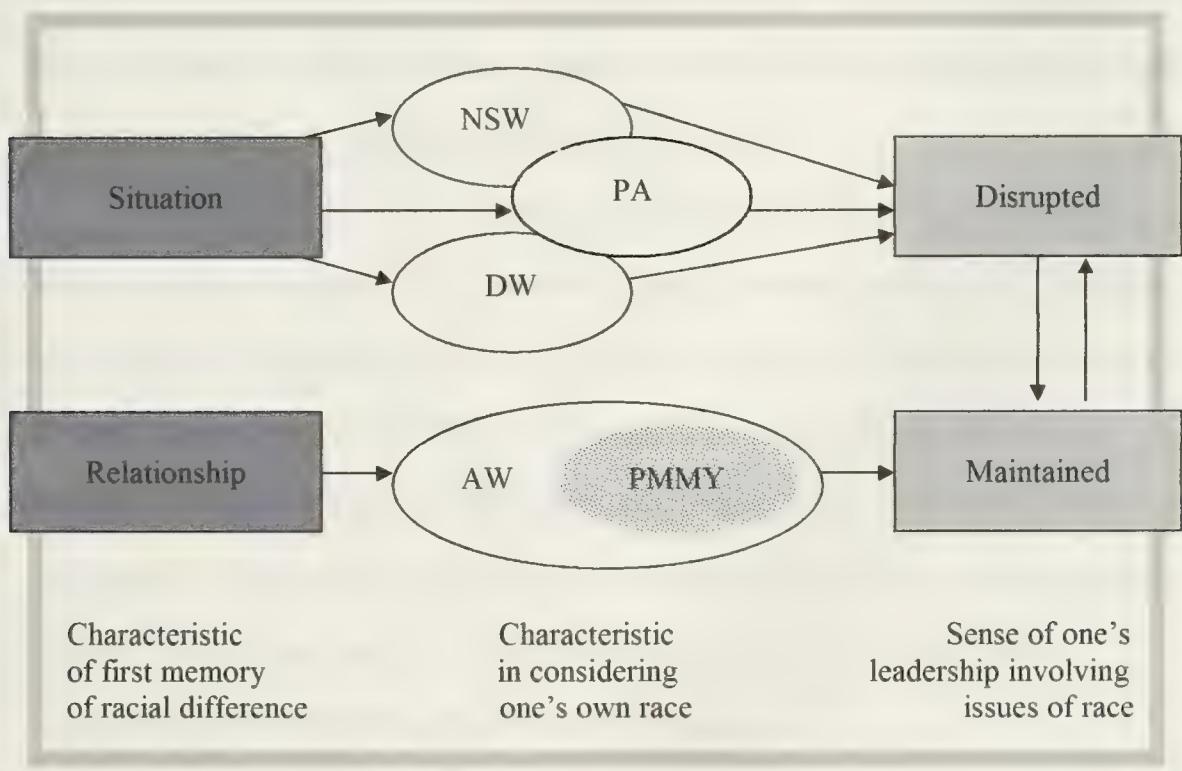


Figure 4.1. How the four major findings connect in this research. AW/NSW/DW/PA refer to addressing whiteness, not seeing whiteness, dismissing whiteness and polite avoidance. They are further explained and discussed beginning on p. 133. PMMY refers to the responses of four women in particular, and is explained on p. 165.

The respondents

This section reports on the stories of these White women leaders that give their sense of who they are. I provide this through brief general summaries and a personal biographical vignette on each respondent.

The level of cooperation in gathering this data gave an early indication of a useful, perhaps even welcomed venture. Fourteen respondents signed on within a few days of receiving the request, which provided a backup list of two. Because of one respondent's subsequent move outside of Boston, and her difficulty commuting, one woman from the backup list came on board. The scheduling of interviews came with relative ease. Respondents were loyal to their appointments. Very little rebooking was needed because of conflicts that arose. I sensed an initial level of overall commitment and cooperation that did not sag through the steps of this process.

The language attributed to these women was edited to protect their anonymity. Names have been changed. This is the only editing of substance that occurred. The words you read are always their own. The use of parentheses indicates my insertions, such as a change to protect their confidentiality, or to suggest an omitted word or phrase to complete a thought. My further *tightening* of their language occurs only in the form of shortening their responses to help clarify their meaning, and to narrow to a response that answers the question at hand. The nature of their responses often veered from the questions and that material is not included in this reporting.

A sense of place

Within its own borders, this country's most dramatic history involving treatment of racial difference in the 20th Century rests inside the decades of 1950-1970. Historians call this the Civil Rights movement or era. The period produced events and reform movements aimed at abolishing acts of racial discrimination against African-Americans. The era began most notably in 1954 with the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision. A sustained movement continued until 1968 with the death of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and signing of the second Civil Rights Act. Historians have also placed much importance on events that occurred after this time, the post-Civil-Rights era.

Most of the women in this research experienced the Civil Rights era or movement in their formative teenage and young adult years. In this analysis, the term *most* refers to at least nine, or three-quarters of the group. With the oldest born in 1940 and the youngest in 1973, most experienced the Civil Rights movement from their perspective as uninvolved White youth. Only two told stories of personally witnessing or being involved in any part. Most of the women were born in the 1940s and early 1950s. Only two were born after 1970. As participants in this research, they ranged in age from 33 to 66. Most are over 50.

The women were born in or near the East Coast with two exceptions of California and Ohio. Most were born in large urban environments that included New York City, Boston and Hartford. Half of the respondents grew up in or near where they were born. One-quarter of the respondents made expansive moves with their family as children, some 2-4 times as they were growing up.

All of the women recall speaking only English at home, with one exception of Yiddish as a small child. One recalled grandparents who spoke Italian to her as a child, but English was allowed to dominate. Their levels of education include six Master's degrees (plus one in progress), three PhDs (plus one in progress), one with a Certificate of Advanced Study, and two with Bachelor's degrees.

The respondents for this study share a racial and gender identity. They also share a sense of themselves as leaders, and a workshop experience ranging from 2004-05. Beyond that common ground, they have life stories and concepts of themselves that are quite different. The following narratives attempt to show the uniqueness of each woman as it applies to the focus of this inquiry. I describe context that seems necessary to better understand their responses and stories, which follow in the next chapter. At that point I will compare and contrast responses. Here I want to present each woman's situation as idiosyncratic and pertinent to the meanings she assigns to her memory and experience. I also pay close attention below to experiences that appeared problematic or disorientating for each woman.

These vignettes offer a piece of each woman's story from a selection of vantage points. These include her reasons for joining this research project and pertinent highlights of our time together. They also consider how each views her attributes as a leader. Lastly, they include her sense of herself and her race in childhood, and as a member of families and communities.

Harriet

Both of Harriet's parents worked, her father as a doctor and her mother as an author and business woman. Harriet started school at 18 months in New York's Upper East Side. "Did a lot of art from the time I was about two." She went to school across from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, collected baseball cards, and knew all of the paintings on the first floor of the Met. I got exposed to classical music through young peoples' concerts of Leonard Bernstein." She remembers a lot of kids in her building. "We played like maniacs." By age 5, she was in a public school with open enrollment that brought kids from Harlem all the way to Greenwich Village.

From a very early age, Harriet's family had Black housekeepers who were a "really critical part of my upbringing." She talks about them almost as surrogate parents with household management responsibility and describes them with words like "dignity" "standards", "security" and "elegant." Particularly problematic for Harriet was the ongoing care of the child of one of those housekeepers. That child was chronically sick for 30 years, "in and out of the hospital, all kinds of problems with her kids and all kinds of problems with poverty." Harriet's memory of her association with the mother housekeeper of this family kept her committed as an adult to the sick daughter, often going to bat for her in hospital treatment situations.

That loving situation in childhood across race contrasts with a dilemma in adulthood. When Harriet talked about what gets in the way of being a better leader involving issues of race, she cited opportunity to do so, which she often felt was lacking, and then courage. Then she unearthed a dilemma, the wall of behavior that was not a part of her childhood racial stories, which she explained as: "I have too much in me that

doesn't like to make a fuss. My very low-keyedness." She then recounted personal experiences and the fear that accompanied her behavior. She cited some experiences as: "This visceral fear" of young Black men on the street. Fear of Black women. "I was very afraid of the racist stuff, particularly around the bottled anger of one woman." This came during her description of a business assignment. "She was going to explode. She was going to explode all over me. She's going to start attacking me and then what would I do?"

At 63, Harriet is unusual among my respondents with her vivid memory of the Civil Rights movement. She was teaching in Harlem at the time and remembers the value of her support of Black teachers as they boarded the church bus for a famous march on Washington, DC.

Harriet has a master's in education and a certificate of advanced study from Harvard. Her focus is organizational change, and she operates her own consulting business. In a steady voice, she describes herself as a leader in providing new information, perspectives, coaching and direction in organizational change. Her delivery mirrors her description of herself as a leader: gentle, low key, encouraging, bringing tools that help learning and growth, supporting difficult conversations, using humor. Who you are and what you are, the way you make a difference frame Harriet's reasoning for agreeing to this project. "This is an opportunity to learn more about myself. Throw some light on something, rekindle my commitment to social justice." She leans forward with seemingly eager eyes. "I've been waltzing around the whole question of whiteness. More than 15 years ago, the co-counseling movement, people began to talk about privilege. And I didn't get it. Now I see it as a ...very sophisticated lens to understand

power difference. So I'm holding it as a reference point, whereas before it was invisible ... And you see me struggle to answer these questions. So it's not fully formed. It's a seed."

Helen

Helen's description of her childhood neighborhood is thick and rich with social, economic and geographic detail. She grew up in an upwardly mobile Jewish neighborhood of Brooklyn, around the corner from Prospect Park and the botanical gardens and the museum, and the library. The neighborhood was very much Jewish. The neighborhood was also somewhat stratified. Crown Street folks had a little less money than those on Eastern Parkway, who were wealthier, reformed Jews. Those who lived lower down, like on Crown and Carroll streets were conservative Jews with a little less money. Her home was bounded by two streets, Washington Avenue with houses overlooking the botanical gardens and Franklin Avenue, full of delicatessens and fish stores, candy stores, luncheonettes, five-and-dimes, and kosher butchers. She is one of very few of my respondents whose family didn't move at least once while she was young.

Her mother was a school teacher, her father was a lawyer, and she is an only child, a result of being the sole survivor of three children. She strokes short gray hair that was once dark and curly and helped her more than once be misidentified by others as Black. The first Black people she recalls were the people who cleaned her family's house.

Helen's messages from her parents about race were conflicting and unresolved. "My parents didn't trust any Gentiles to start with. And they certainly didn't trust people of different colors." In that context, her father once had a business dealing in Ghana for

three months. He came home having learned a great deal about that part of Africa, “but he never quite put together his views around Black people in America and Africans. I don’t think he made the connection.” Over the years, her mother worked with families who were families of color with some colleagues who were very close friends. “But, to some degree, they were always the exception, and always identified as such. You know, ‘Gloria, that lovely, upwardly mobile Negro woman, Black woman who behave so perfectly,’ who wasn’t like everybody else.”

Helen is an organizational development consultant with a focus on strategy, leadership, organizational alignments, collaborations, and facilitation. She has her PhD in sociology, and has both served and chaired the boards of local nonprofits. She sees herself as a direct and strong leader who, when she gets an idea of what she wants to do, goes for it. Underneath that first presentation, however, “I think I’m really very collaborative. I think I’m seen as somebody who can see both the big picture and the small picture.” Helen will be 66 this year, and is my oldest respondent. I sense the certainty and self assurance in her deep, weathered eyes. “I think I’m somebody who’s pretty results driven, responsible, that I’ll do what I say I’ll do. If I can’t do it, I’ll follow up. I’m pretty timely. In some instances, I think I have been a little visionary in my leadership.” She chose to do this research project because “You asked me.”

Hilary

Hilary and I find two comfortable chairs in an elegant hotel lobby and claim the area for as long as we need with no interruption. I’ve misplaced a portion of my interview papers and the hotel staff is accommodating in the use of their fax to recover a copy of

them. It is not lost on either one of us in conversation that our White privilege is at work on some level here in getting us what we want. Hilary is a trainer and meeting facilitator and recent associate director of a nonprofit organization that helps people find trust across fundamental areas of disagreement.

She grew up as the fifth of 10 children in a low-income housing complex first in Connecticut and then in a very White and rural area of New York where her family bought their milk right at the dairy barn. A sense of difference in her town came down to a difference between Protestants and Catholics. That difference rolled right in the door of her family life with a Catholic father and a Protestant mother. Only later did she have much awareness of what she described as the few Jews in town. Hilary reflected on how many of her formative years were in a sort of “White bubble... in terms of not having to think about race issues and racism.”

Still, Hilary’s experience with lower-class existence as a child helps inform her sense of being White: “It means to have the privilege of not even having to think about my race very much because of the way race is talked about and acted about... If you have the privilege that goes along with whiteness, you also have the privilege of being seen as an *individual* by many people, by many other White people, in particular. It means a kind of freedom from being judged or categorized or stereotyped in a way that I haven’t always had about class. So, my class experience kind of informs my sense of what it looks like to be judged or categorized that I don’t have to face around race.”

When Hilary thinks about herself as a leader, she feels somewhat proud of an ability to call attention to something that might be uncomfortable to talk about. With a soft voice and a reluctance to align herself with strong leadership traits, she continues.

"I'm pretty good... at doing that in a way that's not shaming and blaming, but is forward looking, that's got a purpose beyond the present. And compassion. In my dialogue-type work, being a leader means sometimes setting aside my own desires to be more *in* the conversation."

Hilary joined the research project because she appreciated being brought into this work involving her White identity in a way that was challenging and that pushed people to learn and talk about what's really going on, and not in a way that was trying to shame anybody. "I trusted that whatever conversation I would have with you would prompt me to think more, and help me get a little more out of my bubble."

Martha

Martha vividly remembers the migrant laborers of color in the potato-farming, small-town area of New York where she grew up. Sometimes it's the frightening sight of them packed onto the back of a flatbed truck. At other times it's a fire where kids died. The parents were working in the field and nobody was caring for the kids during the day. She remembers the friendlier side of that migrant experience as well. The house where she lived until she was a teenager was very close to school. Both parents were teachers. She could go home for lunch, and kids walked home with her after school. They would stay to play, both Black and White. Then came high school, the state regents' exams and academic tracks, and a move to a more rural place out near the beach. The racial diversity slipped out of her life considerably.

Her mother came from an Irish Catholic family; her father from a German Protestant family. When they were married, her father's father disowned him. Only his

mother and a brother came to the wedding. Then they had a coming together after a few years when a child was born. After the war, her father converted and became a Catholic, which led to another disowning. Martha tossed her hand in the air. "After a while, finally, my grandmother put down her foot. And they sort of realigned."

As a human resources consultant, she serves the director of Human Resources (HR) in a major medical insurance company. "I think within HR, because of my experience, I'm seen as a leader. I'll take on responsibility. I'll take on action about something. I coach others. I'll say something to my boss about something she does that I don't quite agree with. Early on, we both figured out that I could argue with her about anything." Martha's face is smiling even when she isn't. "I have a direct style."

Martha has a Master's degree, and is back in school studying social conflict at age 57. What motivated her to join the research group? "It's an evolving thing. First I met you, got interested in the work, took this course, wrote about Black women and intersectionality. Part of it is getting back into academics, back in college and writing a paper. Since you wrote, I went 'Oh, yeah, I can do this. I just finished a paper. Of course I'll help you write a paper.' I was interested in research. This is making me more conscious. Interested in turning the volume up a little bit."

Mary

Part of Mary's motivation for joining this research project was her interest in the work of White racial identity and the research. She wanted the opportunity to reflect and share her experiences regarding her developing awareness about race and race relations. She talks easily about the subject, yet with a slight quiver in her voice. "It's not an easy

topic. I can imagine that if I had felt judged by my responses I would not have felt as comfortable to share information.”

When Mary was born in Pittsburgh, her family was waiting for her father to return from post-WWII service. Then came childhood in Pittsburgh, Waterbury, CT, Indianapolis, and on to the West Coast in Oakland, CA. His work as a fundraiser for the Jewish Welfare Federation meant a somewhat itinerant life for her as a Jewish minority, and somewhat of a life in a fishbowl, as she described it, because he was constantly asking for money. Mary was a survivor, however. “Everywhere I lived, I would always have people, other families where I got what I needed. There was a dear, dear friend in Waterbury. I would run away to her house all the time. My mother would be terribly jealous. My mother was depressed... and my father was very impulsive and difficult.”

Her very first memory of race was with one little Black girl in her kindergarten class. They were friends. “She and I would always hold hands and be in the lines together to go places.” Mary’s face brightens yet with a tentativeness in her expression. “But then, we moved. I mean, that was the dilemma so often with friends. We knew that we would move.”

Mary’s first memory of *being* a member of a race was more problematic for her, and came in a family trip to Alabama. This was her first and quite direct encounter with separate bathroom facilities for Blacks and Whites. Mary remembered this experience with the words *outrage* and *unacceptable*. She also remembers the dilemma behind her mother’s efforts to pull her back when she attempted to disregard the rules, a mother she also remembers as having a commitment to social justice.

Mary became a psychologist and operates her own practice providing psychotherapy and personal and life coaching. This career grew first from acquiring a MSW and then a PhD. She admits that she is practicing a bit of self-therapy during our interview as she shares that she's about to turn 60.

She sees herself leading as an independent, self-employed practitioner, as a parent and a spouse. Mary also has leadership roles in organizations, providing a combination of teaching, facilitating and influencing people. "I work to help other people understand and make peace with issues, to clarify and work toward goals, to learn new skills, to accomplish tasks, and to develop good values."

Paula

Paula escorts me across the elevator lobby to a small, quiet conference room. Inside the room are walls and shelves decorated simply with art from the predominantly Asian cultures of the organization she serves. As the head of development for a growing nonprofit, her relaxed demeanor feels comforting and impressive to me in a job that is quite new for her. I see a look on her face, a partial smile and bright, interested eyes that make me feel as if I've found a very cooperative counterpart for this first interview.

A "child of hippies who were very young when they had me and not married," Paula began life in California, although Brooklyn became her childhood home. Her life until her teenage years involved a single mother, various boyfriends and husbands along the way, and a younger sister and brother. Her father later moved to Brooklyn with a new wife and stepson who were also a part of her childhood because "this was one big hippy, happy family."

Brooklyn gave Paula a unique sort of perspective for a White person because of her experience with its inner-city, heavily racially mixed environment. Her memory is “tons of new immigrants,” some of whom might be White, but in areas “just as poor and under-advantaged as Black communities.” Paula thinks she was raised in what is often stereotypically viewed as the inner-city Black environment. Through the years “Some of my Black friends have said ‘I swear you’re Black.’” Along with such firsthand racially integrated young life experience, Paula’s concept of the Civil Rights movement would have been historical only. She was born in 1973.

Paula is half way through her MBA, and has moved professionally through other educational and nonprofit leadership roles before her current development position. She also serves as a strategist in guiding the executive director and the board. She appreciates being able to lead by example. “Things like work ethic, trying to be a good mentor, whenever and wherever possible. I take jobs where I have a lot of enthusiasm for what I’m doing. Which is why my resume may not look very linear or sensible. It sort of follows my stages and passions in life as I grow and change and learn.”

She chose to participate in this research because “I think it’s important, again to be thinking about, talking about, then analyzing and compiling this kind of information. I was excited to re-energize, re-awaken to some degree this part of me that I used to think was an important part that dropped down among the priorities.” In our second time together, Paula shared a perspective on her first interview that involved a dilemma of how sheltered she felt her life was here in Boston, as well as her reaction to race, and how that’s changed over the years. “I was more aware, enlightened, had more diversity in my life. I’d like to blame the city (Boston) again, but I know I can’t do that entirely.”

Sandra

Sandra has a lot to say and she talks fast. Sometimes it takes a while for her to plant a period at the end of a sentence. I find her at work on the phone in front of a pile of architectural drawings with the phone line flashing a waiting call. When she's finally free, I'm pleased to hear that she wants to leave the building. She calls herself the president, leader, design instigator, chief bottle washer, and collaborator of this architectural firm. She's also its founder.

"I had a pretty idyllic childhood. I always say that I have no excuses for not succeeding in life." She is grateful for two sets of living grandparents whom she saw at least once a week. "I experienced a more integrated upbringing. Elementary school right through high school. Strong Black community. I had a Black boyfriend. Probably my sister's closest friend was Black. It never occurred to me that my life would not be always with Blacks."

The ongoing dilemma for Sandra is in facing her whiteness. "I'm saying I even never felt White. In your forum, I always identified as a non-White really because I was Jewish, and that was a minority." Sandra also struggles with whiteness concepts in our interviews because for her they are synonymous with Christian mainstream. For example, "At Christmastime, you know you're a minority. I never grew up thinking I'm this White person. I grew up thinking... story of my father not becoming an engineer because he was Jewish. They made a cousin of mine change his name so he could be a lawyer at law school. There were quotas."

Sandra opted to join this research project to help, because she knew it would help her. "I feel, if I help you, I'm just beginning to turn the pages in a book. Of course, I

knew that in the process I'd learn, so there was a selfish interest at the same time.

Obviously we're not doing enough about it, and we don't know enough about it. You're actually talking to people instead of just assuming about people. It's just so valuable."

From an early age, Sandra says she was always the one who was told, here you take charge. Here you do this. "Part of this was that I was always willing to DO it." She emphasizes that you really have to inspire people to do, to listen to you. And you have to earn that right with every person you deal with. "I have insights or quickness of thought that I think gets people to genuinely consult me as opposed to feel like they *have to* consult me. People understand that I have values beyond money, and that I value them and I value the society as a whole."

Shirley

Two days after Pearl Harbor in 1941 mark Shirley's description of her birth date. A year later, her father went off to join the D-Day invasion. She lived with her mother in one room of a house that her grandparents owned in the Bronx. She remembers the neighborhood and her family as close-knit on streets full of White folks, Italians and Irish Catholics. Because education was important to her, Shirley reasons, she chose to be with Jewish friends from school rather than fellow Catholic friends who were neighbors on her block. By junior high, some Black children were in her school, but usually segregated out of her classes because of perceived ability. College, however, was right in the middle of Harlem, and cross-race experiences developed, even one where she remembers feeling close to a Black student and thinking that "our skin color was not going to let this go any further than his being an attraction to me." Later, she rejoined her religious roots and

married a Catholic, until they both converted to Unitarian. Shirley is now a Unitarian parish minister.

Shirley's response to first memories of recognizing racial difference reveals a disorienting and problematic moment created by a critical incident. She recalled a "very troubled" African-American girl in junior high school. "I think she scared all of us. She came in mid-semester and they just put her somewhere. I don't think they knew what to do with her. Shirley remembers the girl as extremely disruptive, one who lasted maybe two months in the class. She never mentioned her name. "I think she had major, major emotional problems." The thing Shirley remembered most was that the girl "came to school with short skirts and no underwear. She would flaunt her femininity in the classroom." Then, after using this story to answer a question about recognizing racial difference, she concluded, "I never attributed that to being Black."

When Shirley talks about her leadership strengths, she likes the word *vision*. "I think it's one of the things I have as a gift, the ability to hold the vision and go back to the vision as a starting point, or a going-back-to point, or a foundation point in whatever we're doing." Shirley is very polite in her response, yet she doesn't take well to this whiteness theme. She's proud of not seeing race: "I don't see and do Black and White." Her whiteness comes back to her as a reason she's lost job opportunities when parish ministers of color were in demand. She references this job placement story when she is asked to describe an act of racism she witnessed. In a nine-minute answer she tells several stories, but never cites an act of racism.

This research project gave her a way to learn more. “That’s always important to me. It’s an educational opportunity. It was important to take time out to explore this in my mind so that I’m at a different educational level.”

Susan

Before Susan finishes telling me about her family, we’ve tallied a history of divorce and remarriage, brothers, sisters and stepchildren in both her family and her husband’s that morphs into well beyond a dozen persons. “Sometimes I think I have three families because I have the original four-girl family that I was born into, and then my parents both remarried and had more kids.” Her parents both grew up in Cambridge, where she also spent the longest part of her childhood. The descriptions roll out on top of each other: “I definitely feel White Anglo Saxon, Protestant, White old Boston, White Boston connected, private school, all that kind of stuff.”

She has a Master’s in Teaching and directs the curriculum and assessment operation of a local educational nonprofit. As a leader training teachers, she feels she’s best as a leader when “I’m training people about my curriculum. That’s pretty easy because I wrote it. I continue to believe I’m the best expert on it. I think I have a really good version of speaking from what I know and what I’ve seen people do and leaving room acknowledging that everybody brings their own voice. Sometimes I’m good at leading because I have a lot of energy and I’m organized and getting something done.” She looks up at me, and pushes back her tousled hair with an acknowledgment of appreciation that someone really wants to hear that she thinks she’s good at these things.

Susan remembers the most critical era of civil rights in this country from a television screen at age 4 when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot. "My best friend was a little Black girl at school. I don't remember her, but I remember being told I couldn't go and play at her house because Black people were angry at White people because MLK had been shot. And so it wasn't safe for me to go."

Susan's grandmother was her family role model for resisting racism. She talked about a variety of different people who lived in her grandmother's house, yet still recalled that most of them were "pretty White." Susan remembers her grandmother working with Head Start, with urban schools and going in and interviewing kids and listening to their conversations and how they knew things. "She was probably talking to us a lot about like the privileges we had vs. the things that kids in real urban settings didn't have." The problematic moment in Susan's description came with a sense of going out to others, of talking to others, but of returning to a norm of no change in the way one lived because of any experience or learning. Her impression from her grandmother was that "kids are kids. Not just like a noblesse oblige, but a gee, we're lucky and there's also a lot of great stuff going on beyond our scope."

Susan joined this research because she was "flattered" to be asked. "I do like to have the opportunity to talk about these topics." Perhaps most disorienting and problematic for me in this exchange was her response to my request for any thoughts or perspective on our first interview: "Nope. I'm afraid it was a very fun conversation, and then I finished. And I don't remember what we talked about."

Wallis

Wallis was born in South Dartmouth, MA, while on her mother's summer vacation. She translates this to mean her family's summer home, accessible by ferry to New York City where her grandfather worked on Wall Street and founded one of the first mutual funds, and that her grandmother "had the money." Her grandparents had *help*, both at home and on the shore, which for her later meant wealthy communities on the Maine coastline and then west of Boston. That *help* in South Dartmouth was always Black, and the families lived in a little house attached to the kitchen. Wallis was never allowed to play with them. She sums up her family history as: "Upper middle class. I'm old money. Dad was a banker. Then I went to Vassar and then Harvard Business School."

"I've been given every advantage. I've been given every advantage to fail with, or succeed with. I think that makes a huge difference. So I'm bright and all that, but there are a lot of non-traditional people who are bright and all that and have been held down by their backgrounds, because they haven't had the opportunities."

At 61 with platinum blonde, neatly arranged hair, Wallis would have been well into her teens and early adulthood through the Civil Rights movement, an era she never mentioned. Her first memory of taking an initiative against racist behavior was in graduate school. She supported a student of color she felt had been mistreated, helping to lead a petition to keep him in school. Now she leads consulting teams and senior management teams. "I actually tend to be immediately appointed the leader. Maybe that's because I'm a Leo. A rooster. All of which makes me the center of attention. And I just start spouting ideas. Getting worse as I get older." Wallis sees herself as "reasonably

collaborative. I listen to people. Try to get my team to drive the discussion and then if I have to move it, I will to meet whatever the objective is.

Her family experience with race unfolded into a series of stories that faded into little personal detail. Numerous examples showed little followup, or completion of a story, vagueness of detail, and no indication of interest in talking about details with the source of a story then, or now. For example:

Wallis mentioned parents who “were very involved in the Black movement, but from a comfortable perch in Lincoln through the Unitarian church.” She couldn’t recall details of the involvement. She recalled an MIT student from India they “adopted”, but shared no details or learning from this experience. “I was probably going from high school to college and was pretty self-focused at that point.” She recalled that people were going to the Black areas of Boston and helping with polling or soup kitchens, with whatever needed to be done. “And I think there were some of Dad’s friends who were interested from a legal point of view in franchising. In making sure Black people were full citizens. I think there was some recognition that, you know, they were missing out on a whole group of people that could be good workers if they were given a chance. So I think there was some stuff going on in the business community, too. But I’m not real clear on that.”

When Wallis was asked how this conversation might have caused her to hear any old information or consider any old knowledge in new ways, she repeated a frustration of not having a more diverse group of friends, of living in a mostly White community with a few Asian people, and not having school-age kids who could help lead her to more racial diversity. The disorienting element here appeared to come as a demonstration of

helplessness within one who was otherwise quite self-assured. She seemed to be searching to find something to blame, as if friendships, White communities and adult children were some kind of barriers, some force beyond her control that held her back. She joined this doctoral research project because “It’s a way of doing something.”

Yvonne

This morning I’m on a college campus and the population of undergraduates around me is richly diverse racially. I realize this is a first. I’ve never encountered this kind of diversity in all of my research interview environments. Yvonne rolls in with students approaching her along the way. She directs part of the human resources operation at this institution. We attempt to hide out in a conference room, but the privacy doesn’t last long.

At 33, she has a master’s in social work and is my youngest respondent. Yvonne sees her role as providing ongoing individual, group, and structural support for our students as they develop throughout their years at the college. She helps facilitate a sense of membership and comfort in this diverse community. As a leader, she tries to model the school’s mission of social responsibility, leadership and inclusivity, in how she interacts. She also encourages students who are normally marginalized to have a voice in the community. “I try to address conflict in a healthy way and provide opportunities for others to do this as well. I lead open discussions about issues that matter, but are sometimes uncomfortable, and I make it a common practice to think about group process and decision-making in terms of who feels like they are being heard and who does not. Also, I try to reflect, both publicly and privately, on the ways that I make mistakes and

fail to do this." Someone knocks at the door with a question, after which we try to hide out in a corner office.

She was born in Boston and grew up in an upper middle-class suburb. She had some close neighbors, and a lot of memories of just playing outside. Neighborhood parties. "A lot of warmth there. My parents always had a lot of friends. It was very social." Yvonne's first memory of race came through her school's Metco program, a way to give inner-city kids opportunities in stronger suburban school programs. Friendships across race, however, were more in the neighborhood around age five with an African-American girl and, later, an Asian Indian boy.

Yvonne has not resolved problematic moments with her parents involving race and ethnicity and her multiracial work. "The Jew stuff was always their focus. It trumped everything." This is a constant that continues in her relationship with her parents. "I would have tearful fights about it (race and my privilege) because I was just passionate, speaking from my student's point of view, and what I've learned. That was making them feel like I was saying they were bad people because they have a different opinion." She thinks this has caused a lot of conflict. "Sometimes I just don't want to talk about this kind of stuff with them, which is hard because it's so much of my daily life, that I'd like to be able to... It's frustrating when they don't agree. So much of my work here is helping people when they don't agree on things."

Yvonne joined this project because, "I'll be honest. I know sometimes how hard it is to get people to commit. I've tried to do things like this in different ways. I just wanted to be helpful in that way. I think I certainly enjoyed it more than I thought I would. I

thought, OK I'll do this to be nice. Certainly feels good to talk about this. I don't always get opportunities to think about this."

Zoë

Zoë was raised in "extremely White and extremely rural" New York, just across the Massachusetts border. Her parents were "immigrants" from New York City. She describes her father as a country person born in a city body. "I grew up very close to the earth, which has always been a great source of spiritual inspiration to me. I think I partly inherited that love from my father. I was the only child of older parents." She says she was kind of a surprise actually. They had given up hope of having children when she came along. I realize from my notes that Zoë is about to turn 60 within days, although she doesn't bring this up.

Her first face-to-face memory of racial difference came when she was around 10. Her family took a vacation, a little spring trip to Washington, DC, to show her the capital. "My parents must have picked the hotel long distance. We were in a Black neighborhood."

Zoë is principal of her own management consulting practice and specializes in assisting organizations in change, especially involving global diversity and inclusion, and board development. In a slow, deliberate voice, she gives a detailed five-part answer to how she sees herself as a leader. The high points involve listening well, helping clients clarify their needs and delivering effective solutions, acting as a bridge, an ambassador, a translator.

Each respondent was asked deep into the interview process how being a leader affected her sense of being White. Zoë found this more problematic than most, but never backed away from the question. In fact, she spent more than six minutes, with many pauses, working over a response. “Being a leader and doing the kind of work I do...I’ve learned that there are just so many models for being a female leader. Maybe the analogy would be like to painting and paint. When I was a younger person, the palate that I had of leadership styles had some colors on it, but it was a fairly narrow range. ...As I’ve seen a lot of very strong women of African descent...very strong Latin American women...Asian women, it’s really expanded the colors on my palate as to the ways that women can lead. I don’t know if it’s changed my leadership style any, but it sure has expanded the realm of what is possible.”

Then a more affective response: “Another thing is there’s a certain loneliness, because I often see things if I’m in an all-White group, I’m always seeing things...that I think other people are not seeing.”

The questions I ask Zoë get a great deal of respect and attention. Occasionally, she pauses for minutes at a time to organize her thoughts and delivery. She not in this process for my benefit alone. Zoë is at work here. Her motivation for joining this research project comes in three parts: Partly that I asked. Partly that she had seen some of the work that I had done. Partly, that “I’m very interested in issues of White women and whiteness and racism. And I thought it would be something that I would get something out of.”

For easier reference, the table below offers a summary of key data on these women:

Name	Year of birth/age	Education degree	Professional role	Other salient identities
Harriet	1943 / 62	CAS	Management consultant	Jewish. Lesbian in partnership.
Helen	1940 / 66	PhD	Founder/owner organizational development firm	Jewish. Immigrant father (Romania). Divorced. Children. Lesbian in partnership.
Hilary	1952 / 54	One-year grad study	Consultant, former associate director of nonprofit	Catholic. 5 th of 10 children. Married. One of her children in biracial marriage.
Martha	1949 / 47	Master's degree	Asst. to HR director at major insurance firm	Irish Catholic mother. German protestant father. Married. Children
Mary	1946 / 60	PhD	Psychologist	Jewish. Married. School-age son.
Paula	1973 / 33	MBA in progress	Head of development for nonprofit	Maternal Christian influence. Jewish father. Married
Sandra	1954 / 51	Bachelor's degree	President of architectural firm	Jewish. Married. School-age son.
Shirley	1941 / 65	Master's degree	Parish minister	Raised Catholic. Now Unitarian. Married. Children.
Susan	1963 / 43	Master's Degree; PhD study	Director of curriculum and assessment for nonprofit	Quaker father. Married. No children.
Wallis	1945 / 61	Master's degree	Founder/owner consulting firm for senior mgmnt. teams	Unitarian childhood. Divorced. One daughter.
Yvonne	1973 / 33	MSW	Assistant dean of a college	Jewish. Not married.
Zoë	1946 / 59	Master's degree	Founder/owner of management consulting firm	Protestant. Not married.

Table 4.1. Summary of characteristics of each respondent

Early memories of racial difference

If identity occurs on many levels, and is defined by the past (Ibarra, 2005), then a look at one's past involving race takes on meaning. Assumptions and perceptions of those past situations would be particularly important in forming images of their history, and perhaps are all that most of the women could still claim in their attempts to find meaning. I did not try to resolve issues involving accuracy, reliability or influences on their memory or on their way of telling a story, or how that story might have changed over time. Instead, I accepted and valued these stories as something that had an impact on each woman. Neither the respondent nor I relied on artifacts or records, or the presence of another person or source during our time together. I had only learning moments, their interpretations and descriptions of behavior and attitudes. Those concepts might likely be all that the respondents had as well. They constitute the material I analyze here.

Regarding the past, I asked these women to recall race on two levels. The first level involved a first memory of racial difference. The second involved their first memory of being a member of a race.

As the women talked about their first memory of racial differences, several themes developed in the examples they cited. Two categories became significant: situation or an individual. Each woman's response easily fit into one or the other, which I will explain further.

First memory of racial difference

SITUATIONS	INDIVIDUALS
Helen	Paula Harriet
Martha	Hilary
Sandra	Harriet Mary
Susan	Shirley (not personal, not pleasant)
Wallis	Mary Paula
Zoë	Yvonne
6 TOTAL	TOTAL 6

Table 4.2. How first memories of racial difference fell into two distinct categories

Half of the respondents recalled a *situation* as a first memory of race. Wallis recalled not being able to play with the children of Black servants. Susan remembered the impact of the television broadcast of news about the shooting of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Martha accompanied a parent who helped take the town census in Black neighborhoods. Helen referenced domestic worker situations at home, but without names or stories. Zoë recalled driving into a Black neighborhood unexpectedly. Sandra talked in general about the Black Power movement of the 1960s. Several talked about racially integrated schools. None of these involved a personal relationship. No names were mentioned, or even stories about a particular person or group.

The second half of the respondents related their memories to specific individuals and, with one exception, relationships that were positive. The exception was Shirley's story, when she remembered a Black girl in junior high who seemed emotionally troubled. Shirley also didn't recall her name or any relationship with her. Each of the other five personalized memories were friendships at the least. Paula described stories of how she and her stepbrother in elementary school were friends of kids of color in the

urban projects. "Just playing like I would with anybody else," Yvonne remembered about a Black girlfriend around age five. Mary recalled hers at a similar age, "she was a good friend in school," with a memory of holding hands and looking out for one another. Although no one person was singled out, Martha would "walk home with racially diverse kids, and they could stop off at my house, and we'd play school after school." In each of these cases, the women were around five years old. All of these specific individual stories, with the exception of Shirley's, cited meaningful and often positive memories. I offer more from their stories to demonstrate how that meaning played out:

For Paula, having been raised in Brooklyn gave her "a unique sort of perspective for a White person because I think I was raised in what is stereotypically viewed oftentimes as a sort of the inner-city black kid" environment. She and her stepbrother were friends with the kids in the projects. "In Brooklyn there is just a lot more variety. Tons of new immigrants." This is the same Paula who wants to fault Boston, and knows she can't, for not delivering for her in the same way.

Martha talked about the ease of her childhood friendships across race earlier. Here she shares the injustice that she recalls among behavior of adults around those friends. She recalls this as 3rd grade with half of a class of about 24 kids who were Black. "Things were kind of together. ... We played together, had recess together. We had the May pole, and the May queen. And the kids voted on who would be the May queen." Martha remembered by name a lovely, beautiful, athletic Black girl who won. "And they made somebody else the May queen. I think I learned from my parents talking about it. You know, my father was in the school, so he heard about it. My parents were probably

appalled by that, but wouldn't have said anything in the school. It was pretty big for me. Nobody protested."

Mary's kindergarten relationship with a Black friend endured through some protest and dissatisfaction among her peers. "She and I would always hold hands and be in the lines together to go places. We always were friends. Kids would talk about, 'Oh, you can't hold hands with a black child. You'll get warts.'" Mary never mentioned being held back by these comments.

Yvonne had one of her early friendships with the daughter of a famous actress and singer whom Yvonne remembers being raised mostly by her grandmother. "I have pictures of us. She was my first Black friend. That is a memory in pictures and stories and having her grandmother pick her up at my house. Just playing like I would with anybody else. And then she moved away."

Even more memorably, Yvonne recalled strong emotions about the Eyes on the Prize television series when she was in elementary school. She created relationship with individuals in those stories. "I think that got me obsessed at that point with watching, trying to find a lot of movies and documentaries. I was fascinated with civil rights. Medgar Evers, you know, any kind of story like that. She could not understand how people could treat each other like that. "I would watch them and I would cry, and I would want to talk about them."

The last of the individualized references was a life-affirming, "pivotal person" in Harriet's childhood, an African-American woman who was not only caregiver, but manager of the home while her mother worked:

When I think about the early memories, there was a sense of beauty of a person around Olivia and the dignity, although I wouldn't have had those words a child, there was a

kind of aura and a bearing and a security that I felt. When I came home as a really little kid, it wasn't just that someone was there. Olivia was there. That was really important. I cannot emphasize the amount of security I felt as a little child with hope.

In each of the cases citing individual personal relationships, I make a deeper analysis discussed later in this chapter, and find significant correlation to both the tendencies to address whiteness issues (AW) and characteristics of leadership.

Views of whiteness

Not long after this initial accounting, I asked a question that would have required the women to be more focused in their first memory of being a *member* of a race. Four categories rose among the answers these women gave. The first involved those who recognized and responded to the difference in this question from the earlier question about first memories of racial difference. I call this addressing the question about whiteness (AW). The second category involves those who did not respond to the whiteness element within this question. I call this not seeing/walking around the whiteness element (NSW). The third covers those who openly set aside their whiteness as a focus. I call this dismissing or pushing the whiteness issue aside (DW). The fourth category is polite avoidance (PA), a term that reflected situations where a response occurred, hence the use of the term polite. But the response would not be an answer to the question posed.

The following graphic demonstrates the categories that rose from my analysis. The next section gives example of how the data helped me identify these categories.

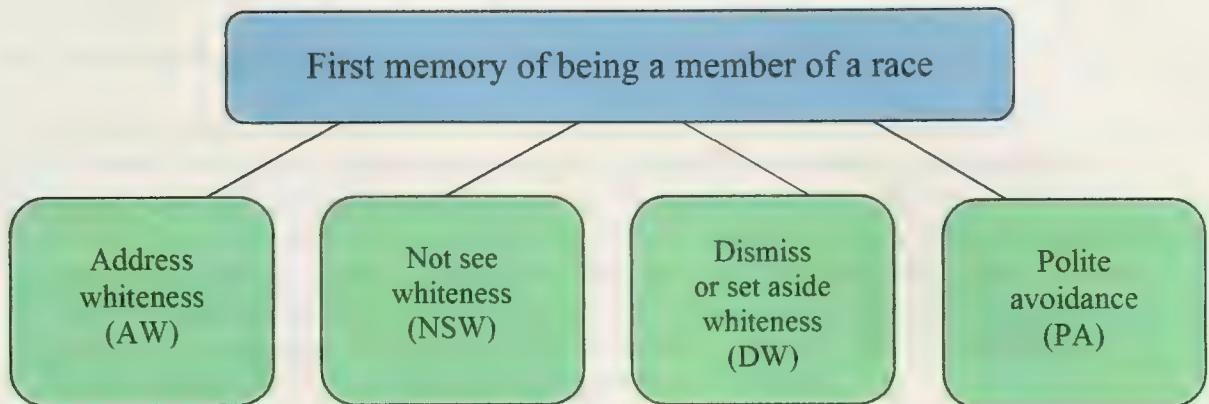


Figure 4.2. Themes that arose in first memories about race

Addressing whiteness: Separating out racial difference as one's own

Half of the women responded to the variation in this question, a variation that emphasized themselves, their first memory of being a member of a race. These included Paula, Mary, Hilary, Martha, Helen and Yvonne. Of these women who did answer with a sense of meaning in their race or feeling about their whiteness, I share these stories. From Paula:

I went to live with my Dad for a while in Queens. He happened to have picked this house that was on a corner. This way (motioning) was all Hasidic Jews who wanted nothing to do with us and this way (motioning) was all projects. So my stepbrother and I were friends with the kids in the projects. Even if we wanted to be friends with the Hasidic Jews, they wanted nothing to do with us. That is when I remember people saying things like 'She's cool for a White girl' or 'you're as nasty as...what are you doing around here...White girls are whacked.' Or being on the train with two Black friends and the train token guy, saying, 'What are you doing with these two, nice girl like you,' because for a while all of my friends were Black or Hispanic, and my stepbrother and I were the only White kids.

In this second example, the feeling came through as perception of White even though the labeling as whiteness was masked. Another contradiction was masked: Mary's

parents as *good* people enforcing a situation she knew was *not good*. This came in a trip to Alabama and discovering separate facilities for Blacks and Whites.

I think of the outrage. I remember it was just unacceptable to me. I couldn't understand how people could be treated as less than. I remember it was around the whole scene in...the segregated bathrooms. That was my first. It was Men, Women, Others. I remember wanting to go into the Others, and my mother pulling me back and saying you can't go in there. And I said, 'But that's not fair. Why should people not be able to do something because of the color of their skin?' I remember being so upset. My parents, with all of their craziness in the family, were really very committed, in their own ways, to social justice, to the rightness of the world.

Mary's dilemma, and the example that follows, illustrate the problematic moments of holding in one person, or one set of parents, values and beliefs that both work well and contain dysfunctional aspects (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Wellman, 1977). Mary valued her mother's general sense of protection and care as a parent as well as her social justice efforts. At the same time she found herself railing against the sense of injustice and racial discrimination in her mother's caution and physical pulling back. Yvonne's recollection below also points out the contradictory roles of her parents as *good* people trying to raise her in a good way that excluded others in a *not good* way. This third example again masks the issue of whiteness with another label, that of being Jewish, although Yvonne is able to pick the two apart.

I guess probably I was a little bit older, maybe 5th or 6th grade. Developed a friendship with a boy. He was Black. When it became obvious that there was a little crush going on, I think my parents always had the same mantra: 'We will always love you. We're certainly not going to disown you. But we'd encourage you, for everybody's sake, to have relationships... it's much easier with people of your own race and religion.' So they'd do the religion thing and the race thing. So I used to constantly be like, OK, so then if he is Jewish, then that's fine. Is it Jewish, or is it White? Which is it? I was being a brat, but I didn't understand what the issue was. So, I guess when I would force it out of them, they would prioritize: 'OK, I guess Jewish. We would like you to be with someone Jewish.'

In the fourth example, Helen's sense of her own whiteness came as someone tried to take it from her. Her realization evolved through having to prove that she was White.

I can tell you exactly when it was. I went on the Experiment in International Living to France (in college). We slept outside and had an incredible summer. We came back home though Canada. The cruise ship we were on ended up coming into Canada. As I was going through customs to get back into the United States, the woman said to me, 'Your passport says Caucasian. And you're not.' And I said, 'But I am.' And she said, 'But, you're not.' I ended up having to go into the ladies room and take down my bra to show her the line, because I had very short, black curly hair, and I had a very significant tan.

Not seeing whiteness: Walking around the subject

Four more women gave me more stories about situations involving race, or about others. They did not answer the question about themselves as White (NSW) or as members of a race. They reflected on the difference that was entering their lives, although the difference was not their whiteness. Again, these women were being asked for their first memory of being a member of a race. I begin with Wallis:

I suppose the first memory as an adult, which means the adult mind is clicking in, was when probably my junior or senior year at Concord Academy when a couple of Black women, no Asians, but a couple of Black women girls, they were girls then, were accepted. And so. You know. They were not in my class, so I didn't get to know them.

Zoë's story:

I found myself having the opportunity to be a pen pal with kids in other countries. And one pen pal I had was a girl in Antigua in the Caribbean. She sent me a photograph of herself. And she was black. I remember my mother saying, and even at the time I thought this is a little wacky, something like 'Be careful that she doesn't want to use this as an opportunity to come to the United States.'

From Susan, who was reflecting on the news on TV about the shooting of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a young child: 'It might be that MLK thing. The next time that we really had much sense of race was.... I went to Shady Hill and in 6th grade they

studied Africa. I assume we studied about the slave trade. I know we studied about apartheid in S. Africa.”

Sandra didn’t offer a memory of note to her, but attempted an answer as she referred to the workshop she attended in 2005: “At your session (laughter). No. I don’t know. It was probably in the same ‘60s era when you realize Black Power and you’re not Black. They were starting to sit together in high school instead of sitting integrated.”

These last two replies from Susan and Sandra, and the two that follow in the next section, are the first of a pattern of avoidance within answers, while still attempting to answer the question in some way. This is my first instance of the theme of polite avoidance (PA). While the examples above fall under the NSW theme, I overlap them with PA because of specific language use. Note “assume” in Susan’s answer, and “probably” in Sandra’s answer. In my analysis, these stories lack specificity in a way that borders on the respondent’s imposing, or even creating, a memory of these situations.

Dismissing whiteness: Finding another reality

Harriet struggled with her answer in several ways. The transcription shows several unfinished sentences. My observation notes indicate numerous *moments*, pauses and periods of silence. At the end of the answer, she resorts to an intellectual and legal place for her feelings, dismissing whiteness (DW), and then turns to the expression of another, bringing in the image of her partner to answer.

I don’t think of race. I mean I only fill out that form on the..., you know because it feels like a legalistic definition. I mean I was...saying to my partner before coming here... I was very struck in the workshop when you did it and how so many of the Whites apologized, and I don’t feel like a... And I’m aware of being White, but the idea of Caucasian. It feels like a legal category. I don’t deny it. I’m very aware of being White because....(long pause). It’s sort of like my partner says, she... I said,

'How do you primarily identify and she said: Jewish and a feminist.' And she said 'I feel like a ...when people say that they are a feminist, they may have benefited by...' I don't feel prejudice against me. I always feel like that's too easy.'

Harriet's use of Jewish and feminist, through the response of her partner, follows the findings of McKinney (2005) and her concept of *supplanted whiteness*. This refers to a choice to deny the importance of whiteness and discuss another identity that is more meaningful than White.

Shirley adopted a *supplanted whiteness* response in another way. She took this question about her whiteness and moved completely outside of a discussion about race. Her immediate response dealt with a reference to ethnic difference, although her explanation followed more religious lines, then morphed into a general reflection of difference rooted in religion, namely her own Catholicism.

Now ethnically, I'm talking about my Jewish friends. ...I think that that counts. Because they are, they're different. And that counts in my mind because of... talking about diversity...more than Black/White. I remember being in the 4th grade. I always remember being a minority, because I was Catholic and my friends were all Jewish. I understood what it meant to be a minority. I went to school on the Jewish holidays, and nobody was there but me. Since then, New York City doesn't have school on Jewish holidays. But they did through this time. And I remember in the 4th grade. We used to get My Weekly Reader. I remember in the 4th grade reading something that indicated that Catholics were the majority of people in the world, and that Jewish people were just a minority. And understanding that I was part of a majority. But it didn't feel like it, because I grew up without that. That was a big awakening. If you're not talking about Black and White, but you're talking about diversity, that was the first time that I realized the world was not as I had experienced it.

Polite avoidance: Changing the image

This fourth category reflected situations where a response occurred, hence the use of the term polite. But the response would not be an answer to the question posed, as the respondent shifted to another subject. I use the modifier of *polite* for additional reasons:

While the women may have stepped around the question of relation to their whiteness, they were still quite willing to provide a response to the questions, usually with a sense of adequacy and correctness. Even when I brought them back to the question at hand, which I was not hesitant to do, I was rarely successful in drawing out the self-reflection on being White. On rare occasion, women knew they were not making the link to whiteness and stated that realization openly. Some evidence of polite avoidance (PA) exists in most NSW and DW responses that drift away from the subject at hand, which was discussed beginning on p. 136. For the purposes of this study, I assigned the women's stories to the one category that presented as most relevant.

PA manifests most significantly in responses that completely avoid topics of whiteness, or even race. Shirley story offers another example where she politely avoids not only her whiteness, but attempts to totally avoid reference to race while concurrently admiring those who are African American, and then finally moving away from race again:

I always just work side by side with Black and Spanish-speaking people...and never conscious of race, or whether I'm crossing a color line. I'm just working with people. In fact...many African American people are more accomplished than I am in so many areas. I stand in awe of what some of those leaders in organizations have done who are people of color. I don't think of them people of color. I think of them as very highly qualified people who are often living on a very high level.... I think actually...it's the poverty and educational line that is a key factor.

Implications of race in Black and White

In addition to the moments of *supplanted whiteness* that rose in the data, a second kind of moment was pervasive: *mirrored whiteness*. This is a concept of whiteness as a reflection of everything that it is not (Ellison, 1970; McKinney, 2005). The existence of

other races, particularly African-American, becomes a marker, a symbol of a boundary, in efforts to define what White is. In my interviews, the use of descriptions of other races to give meaning to concepts of being White was so commonplace that the experiences were simply woven into the discourse, and from my White perspective at least, didn't present as problematic moments or disorienting dilemmas. This may well have been one of the realities of White individuals in conversation with no one of color present.

With this concept of *mirrored whiteness* in mind, I designed an interview protocol that never mentioned a specific race outside of my focus on the White race. I did so to determine how others used race to tell their stories and explain key points without my provocation. This chart shows how these women used other common racial terms.

Respondent	Asian/ Indian	Hispanic Latina/o	Black/ Af-Am	Notes
	0	0	0	First interview protocol questions
	0	0	0	Second interview protocol questions
Harriet	0/5	1/0	11/16	
Helen	1/1	1/1	20/9	
Hilary	1/1	0/0	18/3	
Martha	0/1	1/1	32/14	The two sets of figures to the left denote use in first/second interview.
Mary	0/2	0/0	29/9	
Paula	7/0	7/0	42/18	
Sandra	7/3	5/2	62/35	
Shirley	3/1	0/0	20/33	
Susan	1/0	2/0	19/9	
Wallis	9/3	0/6	35/22	
Yvonne	2/0	2/0	3/9	
Zoë	2/1	1/0	13/2	
Total	33/18	20/10	304/179	
TOTAL	51	30	483	Total of both interviews

Table 4.3. Terms chosen by respondents in talking about race

The preponderance of the use of African-American or Black corresponds to McKinney's (2005) research finding that even Southern respondents in her work who lived in a region where they could be expected to encounter Latinas/os rarely mentioned them. My respondents appear to be holding up the Black/White paradigm entrenched in this country's history.

On only one occasion did any woman use the word *White* in her response. None of the women used the more etic term of *whiteness*. This may correspond, even subconsciously for them, with the findings of White as a meaningless or empty or invisible concept for those who identify as White, and quite the contrary for those who don't (Knowles & Peng, 2005; Maher and Tetrault, 1998; McIntosh, 1988; Nakayama and Krizek, 1995). This response may also be a reflection of my frequent use of the term White and the understanding from the outset that they were being interviewed about White identity issues.

In summary, the appearance of the four categories of whiteness response and these *moments* began with my first question about being White. This question positioned the women to think about being a member of a race. Not until additional questions about whiteness did I begin to see the categories take a larger shape. The analysis of these categories continues, and moves away from first memories to situations more frequently related to the present, or at least to adulthood, for these women.

Leadership and race

Since identity also occurs in the present (Ibarra 2005; Markus 1986), a recollection of current situations and circumstances can give us a window on character,

values and personality as well as opportunities to develop and grow. The process of asking women questions that related to racial identity gave them opportunities to relate in the present, to get in touch with elements of their own character, values and personality. Although some of these women identified as leaders in their childhood, my inquiries about their leadership focused on the present.

Collectively, the professional leadership work of these women fit in two groupings, those who do and those who do not own their own business. The majority (seven) of the women owned their own companies. Six of those seven specialized in management consulting and organizational development. The seventh was a psychologist with a private practice. Of the five who worked within larger environments, one was a parish minister. Four ran departments within their organizations, including head of development, director of curriculum, and two in human resources functions. No one in either grouping, at this stage of their professional career, reported to a male.

When I looked at how these women saw themselves professionally and as leaders, I chose three perspectives. The first grouped the women by their form of professional work. The second showed how each saw herself as a leader in their more emic focus. By this, I mean using the key phrases and terms that are important to them. The third perspective showed what they felt was good about the way they lead.

I looked closely at how each of these women defined her role as a leader, and what she thought others valued in her leadership talents and skills. Then I offered several ways to view their leader role through a whiteness lens. This included links each might have seen (through direct questioning) between being the kind of leader she was and being White. I looked for leadership that might have occurred in response to an act of

racism they witnessed. I then used some of the terms that help define whiteness and asked a direct question about how they used their leadership traits to lead on issues involving privilege or treatment around race. I questioned any responsibility or commitment they might have to women leaders from other racial groups. Lastly, I probed how being a leader affected their sense of being White, and how being White affected how they behaved as a leader. I wanted to see if the categories (AW/NSW/DW/PA) I'd recognized in the memories of their past might rise again. They did.

When each woman was asked to describe how she saw herself as a leader, some of the most repeated descriptions included: Chair of committees and boards, project initiator, leader in longevity at teaching, program and mentoring, leader of training and meeting facilitation, manager and coach. Some of the more illustrative responses included: Strategist, holder of the vision, listener, bridger, ambassador, translator and model. These descriptions support findings that feminist researchers (Helgesen, 1990, 2005; Merrill-Sands & Kolb, 2001; Meyerson, 2001; Riccardi, 2005; Rosenthal, 1998, among others) have described in the non-traditional roles and skills that women have adopted as leaders.

When the women were asked what they thought was good, or what others might think was good, about how they acted as leaders, they mentioned numerous characteristics. The answers came easily and are condensed in the table below.

Name	How respondents described what is good about how they lead
Harriet	Gentle, low key, encouraging, helping, bringing tools that help others learn and grow, supporting difficult conversations, using humor... grounded and present and strategic. Encourage people... to be much bolder than they think possible, then work backwards to tactical and practical possibilities
Helen	Fairly direct and strong...very collaborative... sees both the big picture and the small picture... results driven... responsible ...follow up... timely... visionary... sometimes ahead of the time
Hilary	Calling attention to something that might be uncomfortable to talk about... not shaming and blaming... forward looking... calling it like it is with a compassionate view... stretching and commitment to people being vulnerable... setting aside my own desires... facilitator
Martha	Inclusive... listener... direct style. include people while moving things along... feeling comfortable with who I am
Mary	Gentle but firm... someone who helps... facilitator style... leadership-mentoring role
Paula	Set example...like work ethic, working hard, putting in time... mentor... enthusiasm Set example...like work ethic, working hard, putting in time... mentor... enthusiasm
Sandra	To inspire people to do, to listen to you... enough experience. ...or insight or quickness of thought that gets people to genuinely consult me as opposed to feel like they have to consult me... independent and willing to collaborate ... respect me... value them and value the society as a whole.
Shirley	A fairness quality ... the ability to hold the vision
Susan	Make room for other's voice... speaking from what I know ...energy. organized... people call me up... a resource...belief in the power that you can do something different... comfort zone with resources and authorities and asking for help and feeling entitled to the... solutions
Wallis	Spouting ideas... collaborative... I listen... get my team to drive discussion... Fun. Silly
Yvonne	Very deliberate about trying to elicit thoughts and opinions without too much judgment... encourage people who don't feel they have a voice to be a part of discussion...trying to have relationships, modeling relationships with people who are very different from myself... Managing conflict
Zoë	Concerned with inclusiveness... that everyone feel equally part of a group... a natural facilitator... Bridge-builder... well organized... care about process ...pay attention to acknowledgment of people...also very cognitive... intellectual leader

Table 4.4. A condensed look at what the women saw as good in their leadership

Linking whiteness to leadership traits

In a question that followed immediately after this question on how they acted as leaders, each woman was asked for links she might have seen between being the kind of leader she was and being White. The earlier three themes appeared again. Those involved addressing the question (AW), or not seeing/walking around the whiteness element (NSW), or deliberately dismissing or pushing the whiteness issue aside (DW). This time the themes also fit their leadership traits and skills.

Five (Paula, Mary, Martha, Yvonne and Hilary) actually answered the question that was asked in a way that merited an AW characterization. They made some association with the leader traits that they had just described. Paula and Mary talked in terms of bridging. For Paula, this meant helping to connect the *other* across race with leadership positions where they believed the differences across race could be lessened. For Mary, bridging meant bringing people together across race who likely wouldn't connect on their own.

Three of these five women connected to this question with quite articulate responses. They offered a perspective that was thoughtful and studied in comparison to other answers. They gave indications of experiencing and relating to a sense of their whiteness. This capacity to articulate the issue didn't necessarily mean they no longer felt frustration with the issue. However, their sense of resistance to working the issue was lower, which in itself seemed to calm their approach to their answers.

Martha said she felt an unearned "sense of entitlement, that I should be in the room, that I earned my place here." She knew that her whiteness could allow her to lead through successes and failures and "to easily be able to say, ah, well, some things work

and some things don't," and believe it's all really that simple. Yvonne returned repeatedly in her response to a responsibility she felt to be *deliberate* in all of her efforts so as not to abuse her privilege, her power, all of her reasoning and her actions. Hilary expanded on this sense of power:

This relates to a lot of the things I've had to unlearn about leadership, and I'm still unlearning now. I've had to unlearn about comfort. I've had to confront in myself the idea that I can be in control, that I can design people's experience. All I can do is... create environments that have more opportunities than pitfalls. I've had to bring my heart more into my learning process. I've had to be more empathetic and less judgmental. I used to be much less willing to know about anybody else's situation, or anybody else's experience, or anybody else's hurts. I think that's very connected to being White. The underlying tendency to think you're right, to think you know, is very White in my experience. If you're White, you're kind of more likely to know it all, to be quick to judge. ...blindness to the rootedness of your judgment in your experience of the world. President Bush is a nice example.

A majority of the women (7) went on intellectual and storytelling journeys that reflected on many things, none of which connected the leadership characteristics they'd just detailed with their race.

Zoë, Helen and Susan recognized whiteness, then shifted to issues of gender and walked around the whiteness element. This is also a *supplanted whiteness* moment, which McKinney (2005) believes is implying that race does not matter. I also recognized the PA (polite avoidance) phenomena at work again, but not as significantly since the women did connect with race, however briefly. Zoë and Helen talked about the traditionally female characteristic of taking care of others, women as organizers, and a gender characteristic of not being noticed, not standing out. The last gender shift involved Susan for whom this question reminded her of a desire to be more of a male-type in her leadership traits. Shirley recognized the whiteness element, but never connected to her leadership situations.

Wallis and Harriet pushed whiteness totally aside as a factor in answering this question. I saw this as DW because they didn't totally avoid whiteness or a race discussion, which would have placed their answer in the PA category. Wallis moved into answers about being born upper middle class, having old money. Harriet talked about the traits of African-American women leaders she'd noticed. Sandra, the last of these seven who shared no links to their whiteness was stumped: "I have no idea. I don't feel like I have some rights that were given to me because I am White. I mean it may be true, but I don't perceive it that way. My mainstream coloring has not necessarily helped me."

Deeper associations with White and leader

I pushed harder at the whiteness-leader connection later in the interviews in two ways that I was convinced wouldn't be constructive in the early stages of the discussion. Until they had a chance to talk about their leadership and their sense of being White, and make some associations, I was concerned that the women might find the impact of one on the other too abstract to conceptualize. Deep into the second interview, I asked each woman how being a leader had affected her sense of being White. Then I asked how being White affected how she behaved as a leader. These questions took us beyond the simple *links* that I requested earlier. The questions were challenging most of the time, and gave the women pause. Thinking about the difference *between* the two questions compelled them to try to pull their two identities (leader and White) apart and study them individually. *Moments*, as I described earlier, were in abundance. In nearly half of the responses, women began with phrases like: don't know, clueless, never thought about it,

or not much. Still, in nearly all of those cases, the women persevered, and developed much more of an answer.

The themes of addressing (AW), not seeing or walking around whiteness (NSW), and dismissing or pushing aside whiteness (DW) reappeared. This time, more than half of the group connected with the questions that I asked. Regarding the first question of leadership affecting sense of whiteness:

Paula reflected on trying “to be aware of using any tiny bits of power I may have achieved in good ways. Specifically in helping, mentor, guide or connect other former employees or colleagues or whatever, to help them also become leaders down the road.”

Susan believed she was “more in tune, like a more 360-degree leader. More aware that my reality isn’t everybody’s reality.”

Hilary homed in on her own leadership traits of creating possibilities, creating space, seeing places where a little extra affirmation can be effective, showing some extra sensitive support that might be useful in an ally sort of relationship. “My sense of being White and wanting to be that kind of leader are all tangled up: If I just wanted to live in the whiteness that I learned, I would think I probably had the answers and I wouldn’t need to create space for other people’s answers.”

Martha said “being in a position to see the impact of racism on other people and then to say how am I part of it? Or how can I change it? Or, realizing that I almost did fire that guy... It probably would have been a mistake.”

Mary felt more aware of herself. “In terms of working through people. Therapy or coaching. I’ve always been sensitive and aware of different races and cultures. I like that

I work with a mixture of people. This is part of me. I sort of look beyond. I'm aware of who's around and what kind of setting it is."

Zoë was sensitive to so many models for being a female leader. "When I was a younger person, the palate that I had of leadership styles had some colors on it, but it was a fairly narrow range. As I've seen a lot of very strong women of African descent... Latin American women... Asian women, it's really expanded the colors on my palate as to the ways that women can lead. I don't know if it's changed my leadership style any, but it sure has expanded the realm of what is possible. Another thing is a certain loneliness, because I often see things in an all-White group that I think other people are not seeing."

Yvonne was quite open with her struggle to answer, and the temptation to bypass the harder answers by simply intellectualizing: "I'm inspired to just bullshit, but I don't want to do that." She asked several times to have the question repeated and then she mentioned awareness. And being deliberate. We both knew that these two words were referencing stories she had just told about how easily Whites can choose not to be aware, not to be deliberate in considering and acting on the implications of their race.

Three women (Wallis, Harriet, Helen) did not see the relevance of a sense of whiteness. Wallis recognized cultural difference when she had "non-White people" on her teams, and believed that may be driven by her gender because "when I'm on all male teams, I want people to be cognizant of the difference, the cultural and gender differences." She set aside the whiteness question, another manifestation of PA drifting in. Harriet also walked around her whiteness when she said her energy was with women of all races, listing numerous female heads of state in other countries, who are taking the lead.

Two clear PA examples (responses of Sandra and Shirley) dismissed the question completely saying they didn't know. As one example, Sandra "I mean that's the issue," Sandra said. "That I never really felt myself as White. So being a leader, I don't really know what whiteness is."

Then I moved to the second approach to the leadership and whiteness question. This attempt involved each woman's concept of how her sense of her whiteness affected her leadership behavior. The AW/NSW/DW/PA theme appeared again. Although the answers varied considerably, the pairings of category to individual were nearly identical to the patterns in the previous question. The sub themes of both *supplanted whiteness* and *color-blindness* appeared in this data as well.

Among those who addressed the whiteness element, Susan said, "I think there is a certain aspect of being able to trust authority, and say that you could speak up, have rights, you know, be assertive and get what you want. I think it comes from being from a mainstream culture. I don't think I really get too wound with people's preconceptions about me when I talk. My husband would tell you that I have White guilt. That I am always apologizing for the privilege that I had."

Hilary's reply: "I think my best leadership skills come out of resisting being an unthinking member of the White race. Maybe part of my privilege is having developed some self confidence, and that contributes to leadership. What I need to stretch toward to be a leader is to undo my confidence and be a learner."

Martha reflected on "being able to say, well 'this is something interesting I think I'll try.' I didn't think like 'can I do it or how will I be excluded or disliked.' It's part of whiteness not to think they wouldn't accept me."

Zoë's work trying to lead in the specific area of racial diversity gives her a perspective of trying to define her credibility in doing this work. "I assume that groups of people aren't so surprised to see a person of color doing this work. But they sort of wonder what kind of truck I just dropped off." Beyond that diversity work label, "I don't have the burden. If people don't like my ideas, or don't like the way I do something. I don't have the burden of wondering whether they don't like my ideas or methods because of my race."

Yvonne felt more openly judged by those around her who are not White, and reflected this in her answer. "Being more cautious about what I say. Taking a little more time, being a little more deliberate. Feeling like eyes are on me in terms of my behaviors, my interactions, what words I choose. I'm really, in some sense, a token. I've heard from students over the years, 'When I first met you, I saw this, but after two year, I realize this.' And so, my God, every movement in the dining hall, up here (her office), on the phone, facial reaction to a story, every teeny nuance. It's exhausting."

Those who saw, yet dismissed the whiteness issue were Harriet, Wallis and Shirley. I added their responses to the PA category as well because of their language in so quickly moving from a whiteness response to a fuller discussion that avoided White or race completely.

Wallis moved directly to gender, supplanting her whiteness: "I just assumed the opportunity. If there was any victimhood involved, it was around gender. So that's where I identified. We White women may have the advantage of being White, but we have the disadvantage of being the wrong gender in a male-defined society. My attitude about being a leader has a little bit of that disadvantage of not being part of the power group."

She sidestepped the power groups that she does inhabit, those that rise from her self-defined class privilege and “old money” status.

Harriet moved to her Jewish identity, when she preferred to imagine that Jewishness instead: “I’m trying to get a sense of what I’m conscious of. I feel more aware of my personal qualities and values than my whiteness or any other identity. I guess, you know, it IS about, we’re talking about what our primary stands, how we identify ourselves. I identify myself much more in terms of role, of important relationships in my life. I would identify as Jewish.”

Shirley also admitted privilege, but then buried the significance of race. She provided one of the better examples of the dilemma of *color-blindness*, an attempt to assert that we are all the same under the skin: “I know there are privileges attached to being White. I grew up in NYC...in a working class family in which intellect was the bar that you went over. It didn’t matter if you were Jewish or Catholic or Black, White, Asian, Hindu or anything. The thing that signified who you were was your ability to think and ability to produce and be effective.”

Leading on issues of race

In two separate forms of questioning, I looked for specific examples of how these women felt they had been leaders involving issues of race. Each woman was asked to describe an act of racism she had witnessed in her leadership role. Then I asked if she had intervened in any way. In the second instance, I asked how she led on issues involving privilege or treatment around race. In all of these efforts to locate women’s leadership involving their privilege or whiteness or even general issues across race, I was left with

data that predominantly documented vague references or reflections of what they didn't do. I offer more detail here on how their responses could be categorized.

Three patterns emerged around describing acts of racism that seemed important. They involved the point in time frame, as in how long ago the act occurred, whether they were personally present, and those who could not recall, or could not recall specifics.

Eight of the women recalled an incident where they were present. However, only three (Martha, Harriet and Yvonne) chose something that occurred in the last year or two. Each of the other women chose to describe acts from as long as three to 34 years ago.

Of the remaining four women, two were not present in the act they recalled. An example would be Susan's reflections about a busing incident in a local suburb, which she read about but didn't witness. Shirley and Helen had no recollection at all. I placed Shirley in this category because her answer involved what she believed was a "racist act" of being victimized for being White and passed over for a job because of her race.

In the followup question about whether they intervened, my numbers remained low. Six said they intervened, but only three (again Martha, Harriet and Yvonne) in the last year or two. My efforts to study leadership characteristics in the behavior of members of the larger group (of six) when each witnessed an act of racism had hit an analytical wall. In other words, virtually none of the leadership traits the women had described about themselves early in our association were present at this point in significant enough numbers to analyze closely.

This situation was reinforced when each woman was asked later how she led on issues involving privilege or treatment around race. Three gave a specific answer. Martha talked about helping to resurrect a promotion option for a Black woman that was

being shelved, then cited another ongoing race-related story involving an Asian Indian employee's ambitious extracurricular efforts to aid tsunami victims. Mary gave examples from her role as co-chair of the diversity committee of her son's school. Yvonne talked about "conducting a number of trainings. I created a first-year seminar course on stereotypes. And privilege is a big piece of that."

All of the other women either gave no specifics, or simply opted out. "I've done so little," Harriet said. "I don't feel that I have led. It comes from a sort of lack of perception around difference. I feel like I'm more taking people as individuals rather than looking at a systemic piece." Another example was Shirley, "I don't see and do Black and White. I always just work side by side ...and never conscious of race, or whether I'm crossing a color line. I'm just working with people." Lastly, Sandra, "My life is so isolated from the issues of race. Part of our privilege is that we don't have to think about it. And so I haven't thought about it. I haven't thought as a leader. I've been oriented towards skill level, personality, talent, more than race or gender for better or for worse."

In summary, when I looked at these women in the present and how they defined leadership, the responses reflected traditional positions as heads of committees, boards, directors and managers. Their descriptors demonstrated more of the non-traditional and relational aspects of listener, bridger, translator or coach. Then I introduced questions designed to help them view their leader's role through experience with race in general, and then through a whiteness lens. I encouraged their thinking through leadership that might have occurred in response to an act of racism they witnessed, then links between a leader and being White, and how they lead on issues involving privilege or treatment around race. The most complex questions for some looked into how being a leader

affected their sense of being White, and how being White affected how they behaved as a leader. As the interview protocol introduced deeper and more thoughtful questioning that moved beyond race in general to their own whiteness, the responses reinforced the AW/NSW/DW/PA theme with increasing frequency. In addition, women began to develop a pattern of answers that would fit one part of the theme, which I demonstrate in detail in Table 5.

The questions that probed for examples of leadership across race provided responses that correlated with the AW/NSW/DW/PA theme. By this, I mean the responses addressed whiteness, didn't see or dismissed whiteness, or politely avoided the whole question. I looked for examples of witnessing acts of racism, then intervening in a leadership fashion, and later for leading on issues involving privilege or treatment around race. The answers translated across a spectrum of recent vs. dated examples, whether or not they were present at the time of the act, and whether or how well they could recall specifics. At the most AW end of the spectrum, which would be recent acts with intervention and recall of specifics, I had few stories. The leadership traits the women had described about themselves early on were not present in a significant way.

With this emphasis on the past and on the present behind me, I turn to an analysis of how these women look to the future.

A developing sense of whiteness and future behavior

If identity can occur with the future in mind, and involve our hopes and fears of that future, then *possible selves*, as Ibarra calls them, the “images and fantasies we all have of who we hope to become, think we should become, or even fear becoming” are at

the heart of the change process or evolution of our identity. Ibarra goes on to share that we work and re-work our identities “by doing new things and meeting new people, by telling and retelling our stories” (Ibarra, 2005, p. 202). I used the telling of stories to look ahead. I also asked specific questions about the future.

My first step at assessing issues of racial identity into the future meant forming a foundation. I asked for each woman’s overall sense of whether racism in this country has become more of a problem, less of a problem, or hasn’t changed much over their adult life. This seemed to be an important base line for *how* they might look ahead. Their overall mood about racism in this country might also affect their sense of their own developing racial identity. Several assessed this question verbally as a hard question, a good question and a complex question. Others expressed the simplicity of the question and the multiplicity of its subject matter in non-verbal sighs, moans and pauses.

Paula, Helen and Yvonne felt the situation hadn’t changed much through their lives. Susan, Helen, Harriet, Yvonne and Sandra thought racism in this country was more of a problem. Hilary, Martha, Helen, Mary, Zoë and Yvonne thought racism was less of a problem. Helen and Yvonne gave all three answers, with an explanation for each. Shirley set racism aside as a primary issue. Far more important to her were our values, courage, talents, and intellect.

Those who felt the problem hadn’t changed cited politically correct attitudes that prohibited meaningful interaction. They also cited core values and issues of opportunity that they felt were largely the same. Those who felt we have more of a problem mentioned our country’s education, immigration and foreign policies. They saw people as segmented, exclusionary, hunkered down, and arguing against action. “No Moynihan

Reports, Kaiser Reports, War on poverty, Head Start or general sense of hope going forward," as Harriet described Those who felt we have less of a problem mentioned greater sensitivity and Black middle- and upper-class growth.

All three groupings cited economic and class issues as the reason for their attitude. This was a revealing indication of the different interpretations and different knowledge bases that people use to form beliefs and opinions about the same subjects.

None of the women ever mentioned anything about dominant culture, or the maintenance of a system of oppression or racism emanating from a base of White privilege. No one talked about institutional racism or systemic racism although all had a workable sense of each of these terms. They were asked in the course of the interview to give a definition in their own words of each of them, and they all did. None of the women drew from a single source of information or body of knowledge or report. Their path to forming *possible selves* in the future development of racial identity emanated from a quite muddled, disconnected sense of the present. I use these terms to highlight the many different, and sometimes vague or conflicting answers they gave as they described their sense of the state of race relations in this country.

When the women were asked to consider how the world is changing racially and how their sense of their racial identity might be different in the future, two themes emerged. One involved lack of emphasis on their identity. A second involved emotional responses. As I correlated these responses with the earlier AW/NSW/DW/PA frame of analysis, Paula addressed the question in the most pro-active manner. Harriet, Zoë and Martha also addressed the question with their concerns about becoming a racial minority. Sandra did as well in her fear of "becoming White." Hilary, Yvonne, Harriet, Helen and

Mary referenced admirable issues, but didn't include their whiteness specifically (NSW).

Wallis, Susan, and Shirley set aside any personal element, whiteness or otherwise (DW).

I will explain each response in more detail.

In the DW category, Susan and Shirley had no answer to the question in terms of themselves, but rather global or historical reflections. Wallis dismissed whiteness as well, saying she felt too old at 60 to be thinking of a future changed identity. Sandra feared becoming White, which I interpreted as addressing the whiteness issue, even to the extent of making a decision to not see herself within her more loaded concept of White. She equated White with "Christian mainstream," a very troubling notion for her and very outside of her Jewish identity.

I would be very sad if I really started to identify myself as White. I think it's healthy for me to feel like I'm not part of the White, Christian mainstream. I don't want to pretend to be something I'm not. But I also like that I think not feeling part of my whiteness, not being the major part of my identity, makes me more open to other people.

Eight women (Paula, Hilary, Yvonne, Harriet, Zoë, Martha, Helen and Mary) referenced feelings they believed would guide them, which gelled under passion and fear. The passion related to an ongoing commitment to human rights and social justice issues for Helen, and for Hilary, a mothering instinct about protecting her future mixed-race grandchildren, both women in their NSW category. The fear related to becoming part of a minority for Harriet, Zoë and Martha, all of whom were in the AW category.

Helen was redirected to the question three times, and then finally, with a clear focus on herself, followed a moment of *supplanted whiteness* and stated that White for her was "somewhat peripheral," that Jewish and lesbian "really colors the answer."

Harriet said she was “going to feel like a minority. I mean I already do in some ways.”

She also is Jewish and lesbian.

Yvonne feared a lightened attitude about racial issues that she’s seen her peers adopt.

I always want to be open to change. But, I like my identity now. I guess my fear would be of what could change for the worse, to lose some of this passion if I wasn’t working here...if I go to another job and I’m not having the same daily interactions, and not getting that experience, which I can’t imagine I would anywhere else. I’ve seen it happen with other people. I have close friends from high school who felt passion about these issues. They got into the business world, now are making some of the same jokes that maybe I would have made, and they would have shamed me and said ‘don’t say that around me.’ I’m hearing them be a little more light about these issues. So I’ve seen that change, and I wouldn’t want that to happen even though I can be a pain in the ass sometimes about these things. I want to keep that.

This left nearly the entire group with either no articulated personal concept of any developing racial identity, or with some form of fear of that concept. I emphasize the *articulated* and the *personal* in this analysis. Feelings of fear and passion may well drive action that remains unexplored in these answers. Still, the ability to communicate or to converse about this future sense of identity around race raises the issue: What will be the meaning of behavior that is so difficult to conceptualize, or to explain? Only Paula gave an answer that involved any specific action, which was an actual plan to change her life by moving into a more racially mixed neighborhood.

Another more specific predictor of their future behavior involving race, their own or others came in reflections to a question about efforts to initiate or join challenges against racism. Paula, Wallis, Mary and Sandra gave answers that related to action in their youth or in college. Hilary didn’t feel she’d done much of anything. Shirley, Harriet, Hilary and Susan referred to actions of participation and joining, but not initiating or

challenging. Shirley described her involvement as anti-oppression because anti-racism “is a very narrow area.”

Leadership characteristics, at this point, seemed to have morphed into an unknown for most of these women. Leader-like behavior was being set aside, a choice they have, while still choosing to identify as leaders in other realms. For most, a joiner or follower realm at best was the norm. Four women (Zoë, Yvonne, Mary and Martha), one-third of the group, gave an answer that involved current initiatives or challenges. All of these examples were related to their work, either as professionals or in volunteer organizational leadership. Zoë and Martha gave replies that involved human resources leadership initiatives on behalf of clients. Marty’s involved program design and implementation involving race-related issues.

One last indicator of future behavior and a developing sense of whiteness came in responses to a question about what might get in the way of each woman’s efforts to be a better leader involving issues of race. Paula, Susan and Shirley cited a busy life. Martha mentioned the slowness, the plodding, the ongoing sense of things not getting fixed. Wallis cited her inaccurate assumptions. For Mary, the difficulty of getting people to “move out of their comfort zone and recognize that these are important issues to discuss.” Hilary, Harriet and Sandra suggested absence of opportunity and the reality of “living in a bubble.”

Most significant in my analysis were two-thirds of the group who cited their insufficient leadership ability. They were not following up on opportunities (Susan), not strong enough (Helen), too sensitive (Yvonne), not intuitive enough (Zoë), lacking in opportunity and in courage (Harriet), not in leadership situations (Mary), and not proper

access (Sandra), for example. Some of the same words and phrases that they had used earlier to describe their leadership strengths appeared again. This time they were seen as absent from their repertoire, as traits that were needed. I viewed this as a selective removal of leadership traits when the subject matter shifted. Some examples of those words were courage, intuition, opportunity, access, delivering, followup, conscientiousness, and involvement.

Helen did give an indication of the impact of talking about these issues. Completely under her own initiative, she brought her future into the present. After our first interview session, she committed herself to ask others at gatherings, usually dinner parties, what it meant to be White. As we sat down to our second interview, she was primed to offer her recollections. She clearly was in a learning mode, and has continued initiatives in other ways since that time.

In summary, as I looked at the future and *possible selves*, I observed women who had a mixed sense of where this country is regarding race relations or who they hoped to become around their race. This mixed feeling of hope, and of fear, was most apparent in how they addressed action that might go beyond an expression of virtue, or the sense of *walking their talk*. Most simply had no concept of a developing or future racial identity. On top of that missing base for most women were missing leadership characteristics that were such a strong part of how they defined their leadership abilities overall.

The following table demonstrates visually what I found involving the categories of addressing whiteness, not seeing or dismissing whiteness and polite avoidance. When a respondent dealt with her own sense of being White in response to the question presented (summarized in bold type) her response was entered in the AW or addressing

whiteness category. If the respondent's answer dealt with the question, but did not acknowledge her whiteness, the response went into the NSW category. If the respondent acknowledged her whiteness and then dismissed or walked around the subject, the response was placed in DW category. Responses in the PA category not only did not deal with whiteness, they didn't answer the question posed. The use of the asterisk (*) designates use of language that merited placement in two categories. This occurred when the women did not completely *avoid* the mention of whiteness, as discussed earlier.

AW	NSW	DW	PA
Addressing the question about whiteness	Not seeing, or walking around whiteness	Dismissing or pushing whiteness aside	Polite avoidance
First memory of being a member of a race			
Helen Paula	Mary Yvonne	Sandra* Wallis	Susan* Zoë
Links between leader traits and being White			
Hilary Paula	Martha Yvonne	Mary Shirley	Helen Zoë
Leadership affecting whiteness			
Hilary Susan Yvonne	Martha Paula	Mary Wallis	Harriet Shirley*
White affecting leadership			
Hilary Mary	Susan Yvonne	Martha Zoë	Sandra
Racial identity in the future			
Harriet Sandra	Martha Zoë	Paula Hilary	Helen Yvonne
TOTALS by category.		Bold face below indicates strongest representation for each woman, which in two cases is a tie across categories.	
1 Harriet	2 Harriet	3 Harriet	2 Susan
1 Helen	2 Helen	2 Sandra	2 Sandra
3 Hilary	1 Hilary	4 Shirley	2 Harriet
4 Martha	2 Sandra	1 Susan	4 Shirley
4 Mary	1 Shirley	3 Wallis	1 Wallis
4 Paula	2 Susan		
1 Sandra	1 Yvonne		
2 Susan	2 Wallis		
4 Yvonne	2 Zoë		
3 Zoë			

Table 4.5. How women dealt with whiteness in their response to related questions

Adult impact of childhood relationships across race

Early in this chapter, half of the women talked about their first memories of race in ways that fell under a theme of individual personal relationships, as opposed to situations involving race. For all but one, the relationships were positive memories. In addition, with these women, I sensed a wishfulness, even a wistfulness about the comfort zone and the learning they remembered. There was a simplicity and normalcy they felt in the relationship, or an enrichment they appreciated. As I observed their storytelling earlier in this chapter on first memories of race (p. 129-133), I heard reflections of an investment in a situation that was valuable then and gone now, but clearly still meaningful. I observed a sense of loss, sometimes even mourning in the manner of their storytelling. At the least, I drew from their narratives a real value for them in these times of their life.

As I looked back across this analysis and the themes that emerged, a deeper layer of review seemed important. What about these very young, meaningful childhood memories about relationship across race? What might their impact be on these women as adults and as leaders? I could not say how the women believed those relationships affected their behaviors and attitudes of these women, because this had not been the focus of my inquiry. But I could look for additional links to other results of my study of their identification with their race and their leadership efforts. The correlations appeared frequently.

The women who reflected on first memories of racial difference by mentioning individuals or individual situations in a positive way in childhood are also women, with one exception, who most frequently addressed issues of whiteness (AW) in their overall

answers. The exception, Harriet, told more stories that dismissed or pushed the whiteness aside (DW), as well as other categories of not seeing (NSW) and avoidance (PA). Harriet's childhood situation, among these five women, also was the only one that involved a treasured relationship with one who was ultimately a Black servant, a helping person, bringing in issues of power, class and economics. These issues did not appear as significantly for the other young girls who were in relationships with peers of similar and sometimes identical age, and frequently across similar economic environments.

These women whose stories correlated significantly were Paula, Martha, Mary and Yvonne and will be cited collectively as PMMY.

PMMY most often recalled situations of feeling White, and could talk in detail. During the interviews, and in reviews of transcriptions, I observed a level of engagement and introspection in their answers that had an important impact on the rest of their interview replies. Examples of their articulation occur throughout this chapter. The resistance of these women was less obvious in exploring the issues of whiteness in the questions that followed. They entered much of their discussion as moments of discovery. They seemed to be covering new ground with more adventure and less trepidation. The results of this discovery process were not often pleasant, but the idea of discovering buoyed them and remained worthwhile.

As each woman reflected on her adult leadership role and the changes she might predict, more correlations appeared for PMMY who shared similarly meaningful childhood relationships across race. These came across four different times as we talked about adult and leadership perspectives. Those four times involved perspectives on the issue of race in this country, leading or joining challenges against racism, projecting their

sense of racial identity in the future, and how they led involving acts of racism, privilege or treatment around race.

Each woman talked about her sense of whether racism in this country has become more of a problem, less of a problem, or hasn't changed much over her adult life. This discussion seemed to provide an important base line for *how* they might look ahead as members of a race. None of these four women sensed that the problem of race was worse. Yvonne articulated reasons, however, for why all three categories of the problem were valid representations of issues of race.

When the women answered a question about efforts to initiate or join challenges against racism, PMMY had replies that involved recent or current actions. Paula answered this question with initiatives that were not current, but gave an indication later of what I saw as a challenge to racism, and perhaps the most dramatic and sustained challenge of any cited by these 12 women. She described how she was actively moving to an area of Boston (South End) that was significantly racially diversified. Yvonne lives in a racially diverse area now. None of the remaining respondents either lived in, or talked about plans to move to more racially diversified areas. Statistics about how they rated the diversity of their neighbors are available in Appendix H.

When the women were asked to project, to consider how their sense of their racial identity might be different in the future, two themes emerged. One involved lack of emphasis on their identity. A second involved emotional responses. All of PMMY women's stories were reflected in the latter category. Even more specifically, these four women referenced specific feelings they believed would guide them as leaders: passion and fear.

These translated into Paula's life-changing move into a very racially mixed area and "fear that the neighborhood is already completely gentrified." Paula also shared a "fear that we've just all become more PC (politically correct in our language and conversation)" about racism in this country. Martha's "fear about not being the majority," which Mary shared: "In the future White will no longer be the dominant race." Mary's passion, on the other hand, rose frequently with her stories of ongoing leadership in diversity programming at her son's school and the fellow parents she could draw into that work. Yvonne's concern was losing the value of her mixed-race work environment and the passion that she feels she might lose if she were to move to another job without the same interactions and experience. She recalled close friends from high school who felt passion about these issues, then got into the business world, now are making insensitive comments and jokes.

When each woman was asked for links between being the kind of leader she was and being White, five women actually answered the question (p. 147). These five were the only women who actually made some association with the leader traits they had just described. All of the PMMY women fell within that group.

When the women were asked about leadership involving acts of racism they witnessed and how, or if, they intervened, half of the group said they did. This included all but one of PMMY. Half again (3) of that intervening group remembered anything recently, as in the last year or two. This was again dominated by PMMY. When each woman recalled in a separate question how she might have led on issues involving privilege or treatment around race, only three women gave a specific answer to the

question. All three were from the PMMY group. All of the other women either gave no specifics or had no examples.

Applying the WRIAS model

Each woman filled out the WRIAS questionnaire, a racial identity scale of 60 established questions. Answers to the questions are designed to show how participants might be placed along a range of statuses of White racial identity. I allowed 30 minutes for this activity before I began my first face-to-face interview with each woman. None of them took more than 20 minutes to complete the exercise. The distribution range of responses of these 12 women across the WRIAS categories is described visually in Figure 4.3. Details of the meaning of each of these statuses are described in Chapter 2.

Two areas of significance emerge that apply to the whole group. The first is the predominance of high scores in the three later statuses of *pseudo-independence*, *immersion/emersion* and *autonomy*. Helms' six stages or statuses of White racial identity are seen as progressive but not necessarily linear. The second is the second block of higher scores in the *contact* status. I look at these two areas separately:

High scores in later statuses: In my analysis, the collection of high scores in the later statuses is somewhat predictable for at least two reasons. First, these women are likely functioning at a higher level of white identity by Helms' description given a level of awareness that they may have brought with them from at least one structured workshop experience on race and White identity. Second, these are women who chose to be a part of this research, and they each made the decision with little hesitation. Since this scale is a measure of attitudes, a higher level of performance on the WRIAS would

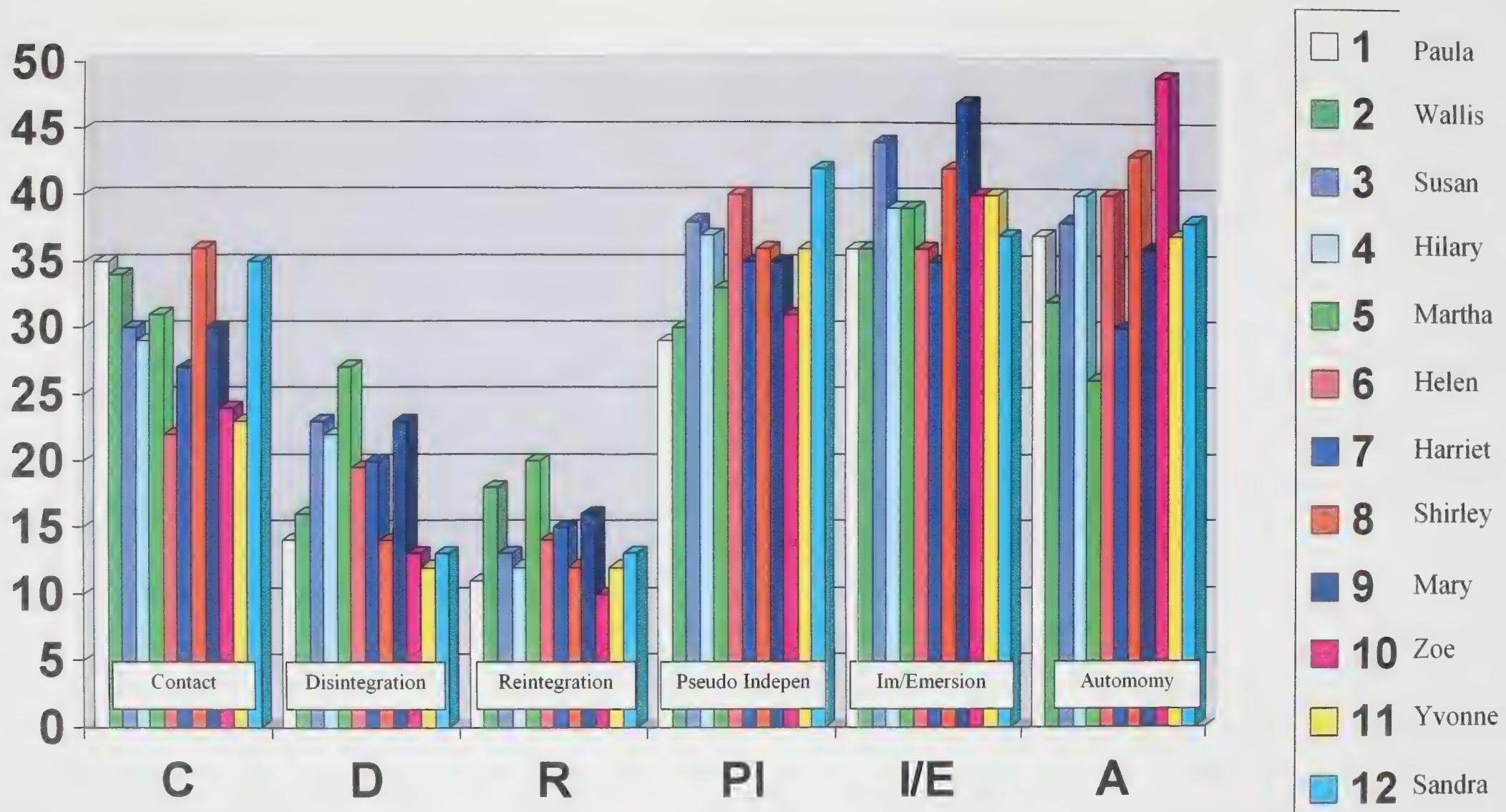


Figure 4.3. WRIAS scores of respondents grouped in each of Helms' six status categories

follow a pattern of behavior congruent with their decision to participate in the research and to cooperate as fully as they did. I now look a little more closely at each of those latter statuses:

In the least developed of those later statuses, *pseudo-independence*, Helms describes an intellectual awareness or liberalism that deals, at least verbally, with the privileges of being a member of the White group. It is an intellectual acknowledgment of racial grouping, along with an emotional guilt and a need to help the less fortunate become more like Whites. In other words, pseudo-independence can be a rationalized commitment to one's own racial group and of ostensible liberalism toward other groups as one begins to acknowledge the responsibility of Whites for racism. It is a good-bad dichotomization of racial groups. Pseudo-independence imposes one's own group standards as a condition for acceptance. Three of the women (Helen, Harriet and Sandra) had their highest scores in this status, with Harriet's equally represented in the next status. Correspondingly, these three women also had their highest representations of responses to questions in the NSW/DW/PA categories. They were spread quite evenly over those categories, with only one example each of addressing whiteness (AW).

In the second status of this high-scoring block, *immersion/emersion* designates an active exploration of what it means to be White. A White person is developing a need to understand her own role in perpetuating racism. This status allows questioning, analysis, and comparison of racial group status relative to other groups. This is the beginning of a positive White identity that is *also* anti-racist. Allowing for a tie score, half of the women scored highest at this status. This includes three of the four PMMY respondents, with the fourth high-scorer in the higher *autonomy* category.

Autonomy is a real valuing of diversity and an outright seeking of opportunity for diversity in one's life. It is actively seeking opportunities to learn from other cultural groups and incorporating that learning in one's attitudes and behavior. It is a nonracist identification with the White group. Autonomy is pluralistic, and allows for flexible interpretation of racial stimuli. It is a self-affirming commitment to one's societally assigned racial group. Five women had their highest scores in this category, again allowing for one tie score. One of those was PMMY; the remainder of PMMY had their second-highest scores in *autonomy*. The most contradictory result was Shirley, who also scored her highest in the DW and PA categories. This leads me to now look at the *contact* status at the opposite end of Helms' spectrum, where Shirley scored higher than any other woman in that one category.

Higher scores in the *contact* status: *Contact* characterized one who has difficulty thinking of herself as White, and even sees color-blind attitudes as positive attributes. It involves a denial of the meaningfulness of race in one's life and in society in general. This status describes those who accept societally imposed racial characterizations and rules for dispensing societal resources. Contact can also be seen as obliviousness to racial information, and as avoiding the interpretation of such information. Initially, this area of significance in scoring felt quite contradictory and unsupportive of the first area. A closer analysis was needed. Two themes emerged.

First, this was a second large block, but it was not close to the dominance of the first, and did not cover as much area (one status grouping compared to three status groupings for the first set of high scores). Each of the respondents' highest scores still remained in the more developed categories.

Second, a closer look at who was leading this area was helpful. This area was made noticeable by only the few who led its scoring. These included Wallis, Shirley and Sandra. For Shirley and Wallis, *contact* was their second highest score. All three also led in the NSW, DW and PA categories. Shirley and Wallis never once appeared in the AW category. In that respect, the results of the two systems of measurement support each other. Particular elements of the data also support this finding. I offer a few indications from the data.

Wallis reflected back on her first interview as we sat down for her second round: "I don't perceive that I have been particularly responsible about race through a certain amount of guilt. Part of that is because I can't figure out how to get at it, in that I feel the barriers that are thrown up by Black women and men that puts me off. I think I explained before that I have not been in a racially diverse environment ever." Shirley was repeatedly supportive in her answers of the importance to her of color-blindness: "I don't see and do Black and White." Sandra was the woman who had the most difficulty seeing her Jewish self as White because White to her was Christian White. She also struggled with race issues in general: "Before all of this, if you told me that's what you were studying, I would have thought, 'Oh, are we still talking about race? Isn't it over now?' So I do admit that the most significant part of this conversation is the unhappy realization that we're not beyond it."

A final comment on any significant scoring in the *contact* status by these women may be supported by empirical evidence (Meyer-Lee, 1999, 1995) that the feeling or affective aspects of attitude are slower to change than the abstract beliefs or cognitive aspects. These feelings may be more linked to the actual behavior of these women. This

perspective, along with trends of *political correctness*, may allow somewhat bifurcated reasoning and therefore scores of some of these women in both the lower and higher end of the WRIAS scale.

In summary, the experience in whiteness work that these women brought created their common ground, even though they attended different sessions and may not have known each other. Other common ground may have been the incentives and experiences that brought them to the point of enrolling in the workshop. This same common ground can be applied to the predominance of scores in Helms' later statuses. The *disintegration* and *reintegration* statuses were quite low for nearly all women, some less than half in scoring of any other status. The bulge of scores in Helm's preliminary *contact* stage for most of this group while concurrently scoring highly in the advanced stages presents questions for further study. One possible path of inquiry might be the proliferation of recent learning and experience they have had, including the anticipation of this research. These situations may have stirred their thinking and their responses, leaving them holding a familiar and old identity while shifting to a new and uncharted identity simultaneously.

Reflection and Conclusion

This chapter sought to analyze how women leaders found meaning in being White and what impact that meaning had on their sense of themselves as leaders. As leaders, these women appeared accustomed to being called upon for their opinions and their expertise. They were center stage. They were on the inside looking in. This was the design of this research. Alongside any discomfort with, feeling foreign about, or removed from the subject matter, I wanted to set aside any obvious opportunity for resistance to the process of reflecting and answering. I wanted any challenges to their patterns of

thinking to be coming from within or from other situations they created, and not from my presence or from the research design. When necessary, I did frequently steer the direction of their stories back to the question at hand, but I did not challenge their perspectives or their stories.

I sought to make the interview environment safe because I was questioning issues of power for these women, even quite unrecognized. For all of them at some point, stories reflected an absence of power, or at least a choice to view situations in that way. I needed to create a safe place for these contradictory elements to co-exist.

One overall indigenous theme that emerged from the participants and that is not reflected in the literature is that of polite avoidance or PA. Their stories came freely, even when they lost their sense of the inquiry. For some, their sense of their experiences or memories didn't relate to the question. For others, a desire to cooperate may have overwhelmed their ability to stay focused or on task. Regardless of what drove their responses, the result of polite avoidance, when it occurred, presented a significant barrier to their ability to address the issue of this research. I will look more closely at this effect as part of my interpretation in the next chapter.

While I engaged in a considerable amount of quantified comparison, I know that human beings do not function as walking scales. I was careful to use the information I gathered in an advisory or observational sense rather than engage too deeply in mathematical comparisons of scores. I also realized that in comparing these women to each other, each still brings a cultural reality that is uniquely her own. The meaning of each individual response to each question was influenced by that individual reality. At the same time, I saw significance in the patterns and themes.

On a very small scale, this research has begun to build a valuable association that deserves further study: White women leaders who recall a meaningful relationship across race as a very young child were able to identify and articulate their sense of whiteness in significant and repeated ways. In this research, their ability to use language, to recall meaningful experience involving their racial identity and leadership efforts, and to identify emotional connection around whiteness issues was noteworthy. They could articulate societal issues associated with race involving power and privilege with particular consistency and meaning. These phenomena were in no way absent among other women in this study. In fact, the data is no doubt loaded with meaningful associations still to be discovered. Still, the four women who recalled these early childhood experiences, most around age five, who probably have no knowledge of each other, grew tighter as a unit across numerous categories of analysis. The door they open to the value of early, positive and meaningful friendships, not just associations, across race, is wide and inviting.

CHAPTER 5

Interpretation and Reflection

"It is very important that White women... examine the way in which racism excludes many Black women and prevents them from unconditionally aligning themselves with White women. Instead of taking Black women as the objects of their research, White feminist researchers should try to uncover the gender-specific mechanisms of racism amongst White women. This more than any other factor disrupts the recognition of common interests of sisterhood."

Carby, 1982, p. 232

When I chose my research domains of whiteness study and women's leadership, I had adults in mind. My data collection was solely from adult women leaders. Scholars in these fields, including Helms, concentrated on adults in all of the work that I considered. I asked questions of my respondents about early memories not because I was studying childhood, but to help log a brief life history as it might relate to their adult stories about racial identity and leadership. This common ground of cross-race friendships in early childhood for Paula, Martha, Mary and Yvonne (PMMY) came quite unexpectedly. This chapter first will investigate this childhood-related correlation. Then I will look more closely at how my research and the literature do or don't tie together, especially in regard to the theme of *polite avoidance*.

As with my own work, Carby's words above are directed at adults. They call us to examine what prevents an alignment of Black and White women in matters involving race. Consider that an "unconditional alignment," by a child's definition, may have occurred for PMMY in a foundational way. Much in their experience and in society may bury the meaning of this alignment, and these relationships, even push against their value, or "disrupt the recognition of common interests" as Carby admonishes. This dissertation research presents the possibility that these women with positive memories of meaningful childhood relationships across race at an early age know themselves as racial beings, or are prepared to find meaning as White women in significant ways. While my research design didn't include exploring reasons why those relationships were meaningful, I did make note of their significant ability to remember names, places, details of activities, and assessments of the experiences. This kind of recall appeared repeatedly for PMMY with their common childhood relationships. As these correlations began to develop, I looked more closely at what this discovery meant for my research theme.

In the introduction to this dissertation, I talked about how our racial identity contributes to our understanding of race, of how we view race relations, and how or whether we act on individual, cultural and institutional levels regarding race. These women leaders, as young girls, acted both across race, across class, and across a common humanity in ways that were meaningful for them. Whether they had been introduced to the phenomena or not, *polite avoidance* was not a part of their behavior in these situations. All of these women later gave indications of experiencing the added dimensions of membership in a dominant White population and disproportionate access to resources, privilege and positions of power. Still these young relationships took hold

long enough to be recalled decades later, and possibly affect attitudes and behavior as adults.

The findings of Daloz et al (1996) around *constructive engagement* may also contribute to the meaning of these early relationships. They describe different experiences where people made a connection with someone different from themselves and recognized a deeper reality of human interdependence. The researchers noted that at some point in their formative years, almost everyone in their sample had a sustained experience of diversity. They came to know others who were significantly different from themselves, by which “they could empathetically recognize a shared humanity” (1996, p. 14).

I mentioned a first layer of common ground in cross-race relationships above. Additional layers of common ground in adulthood pointed are revealed in answers to my key question. These layers involved adult attitudes about addressing whiteness and about leadership for PMMY. My key question in this research dealt with how women leaders found meaning in being White, and the impact of that meaning on their sense of themselves as leaders. When research focuses on how whiteness is identified, I believe we can expand our understanding of how whiteness contributes to our many attitudes and our whole way of being. By being, I mean our larger sets of assumptions, self-esteem, and sense of entitlements, and not just racial issues. In my interview protocol, these self-identified women leaders had not yet been asked to associate with their whiteness when they brought these childhood relationships into the conversation. I do not have sufficient data to call these relationships causal, in other words, directly linked to adult responses. In addition, this delineation of PMMY does not mean that none of my other respondents

had positive or negative relationships across race, or that none shared meaningful concepts of racial identity or leadership across race. Those situations occurred. None followed a pattern as significant as PMMY. In comparison to any other grouping of these 12 women, PMMY gave the most considered examples about what racial identity meant to them. My data also shows important evidence from them of leading across issues of race.

To point out the many ways I saw this data present with such significance, I will briefly highlight several elements. Among the group of 12, these four with their similar early childhood friendships across race addressed issues of whiteness most frequently, and in the most detail. Their resistance to exploring the issues of whiteness was the lowest, measured by the AW/NSW/DW/PA analysis. They entered much of their discussion as moments of discovery without some of the defensiveness I observed elsewhere. Not once did the stories of PMMY factor in the *polite avoidance* category.

In the leadership realm, PMMY could give recent or ongoing examples of initiating or joining challenges against racism. For one of these women, the initiative involved relocating her home to a more racially diverse neighborhood. No one else in this group lived in any of the area's more diverse towns or neighborhoods, or had plans to move to any of them. PMMY also stood out in other examinations of leadership that demonstrated links between being the kind of leader each was and being White, and leadership involving acts of racism they witnessed and how, or if, they intervened. When each woman was asked how she might have led on issues involving privilege or treatment around race, only three women gave a specific answer to the question. All three were in the PMMY group.

How the literature and my research intersect

This section offers interpretation and reflection on where aspects of my research and the review of the literature intersect, and in some cases, where they do not.

My literature review noted the proliferation of academic study in the field of whiteness. I emerged from my own research with 12 professional White women still feeling that this field was a personal journey of our own. By that, I mean when they joined me in this research, our association came through their own experience, and not through a connection grounded in whiteness literature. The field is growing, publication on the subject increasing, and I've observed evidence in the mainstream press. Still, the women themselves rarely cited any published material on whiteness in any of their stories.

If whiteness study grew out of the slow pace of racial reform in the United States (Delgado, 1995), these women were a 30-years-later perspective on that period. Some were adult professionals then, some were toddlers. All of them reflected a sensitivity to this issue that moved them beyond Frankenberg's (1993) concepts of essentialist racism and colorblindness. Her most developed theme involved race-cognizant assertions that still showed internal contradiction. This third theme is where most of my respondents began their journey, and where most of them moved actively beyond, at least at some point earlier in their lives. Some of my respondents maintain that activist course. As with Frankenberg's most enlightened women, my respondents continued to expose the

contradictions they felt without resolving them. For some, this digressed into *polite avoidance*. For others, the opportunity arose to simply air the contradictions. And for others, colorblindness remained the elephant in the room that occasionally became quite evident. When colorblindness rose for both my respondents and Frankenberg's, it was still seen as appropriate, as if to symbolize fairness or equal treatment, or civility or simply polite, considerate behavior.

Frankenberg also shared the criticism she received from some respondents for even bringing up the subject of whiteness, which was rarely my experience. Walking the talk became the focus of Frankenberg's most pro-active women. The talking of many of my respondents has become more enlightened than that of Frankenberg's. The walking issue remains, especially when so many of my women cited action only from the past. These women seem more resigned to a state in life and a wishful approach to any sense of agency with the issue of whiteness. A few women could step outside of their situation and recognize this more latent state, or their past actions. Most simply described it – in the past tense. Women on current paths of walking were a source of intrigue and inspiration, even in the frustrations they may have felt with the process.

Some of the more advanced critical whiteness work pointed to larger economic, political, psychological and social advantages for Whites (hooks, 1988; Wellman, 1993). The more proactive work (Levine-Rasky, 2000; Ignatiev, 1995; Lipsitz, 1995; Roediger, 1994; Wellman, 1977; among others) called for a dismantling of unjust social relations and the power that Whites embody in institutions. These more pro-active scholars openly pushed for a more equitable society and democratic social order. Most of my respondents could reflect an awareness of the larger advantages and gave personal

indications of working to move against the system, although not often currently. Their participation in the proactive, institutional realm cited above was essentially absent. The most proactive or divergent *race traitor* or *new abolitionist* stance (Ignatiev, 1997) in their stories was nonexistent.

Scholars shared that the difficulty of getting to the content of whiteness connects with the denial and difficulty of getting at its power and privilege and oppressor status (Frankenberg, 1993; McIntosh, 1990; Wildman, 1996; Wellman 1977). My respondents' stories supported this contention. They demonstrated how privilege is rarely seen by the holder of the privilege, and that those who have it can choose not to object to oppression, or choose not to see the racism, if they want. They demonstrated these characteristics when they were asked to do so in specific questioning. They described terms of white privilege, dominant culture and systemic racism. This was not always the same, however, as being able to see these phenomena when they occur, and certainly not the same as acting in opposition. I suspect that my own whiteness kept me from recognizing even more examples than I documented. I sensed the missing advantage here of never feeling the frustration and pain firsthand, of not being taught, or choosing not to remember, the subtle sight and sound of oppressive thinking and action.

hooks (1989) reminds us that a desire to be good and to be ethical in this self-identification with race creates another conundrum, which is the moral mindset that develops in the process. I could hear this problem in the women's stories, the pull in trying to be right and do right. hooks cautions that an open mind and a liberal way of identifying for Whites is, at best, only the beginning of a process of unworking White supremacist thinking and behavior. By itself and without ongoing support, this mindset

does not provide the kind of vigilance necessary to see the impact of some behaviors. In some cases, a liberal mindset can mask the need for that vigilance.

The ongoing support issue was important in my data gathering, yet created its own conundrum for me as a researcher. I tried to find a balance between offering and withholding, between a dispassionate sense and an encouraging mode. I was mindful of the “real talk” aspects of Belenky et al (1986, p. 144) in which emphasis is placed on active listening. Domination is absent, reciprocity and cooperation are prominent, and judgment is withheld until one empathically understands another’s point of view.

In the end, the support I gave was in the form of a consistency of interest in hearing their stories, in acknowledging their value as meaningful, and in a respectful pursuit of answers that came reluctantly to some questions. This meant an openness to any point of view coupled with a priority of honoring the protocol. In reflection, support may have been playing a larger role, especially during disorienting moments. I will share an example.

Questions about how leadership traits affected whiteness, and then how whiteness had an impact on leadership, took us beyond the simple *links* that I first asked the women to make between the two. The questions were challenging most of the time, and gave the women pause, and sometimes considerable problem in responding. In nearly half of the responses, women began with phrases like: don’t know, clueless, never thought about it, or not much. Still, in nearly all of those cases, the women persevered, and developed much more of an answer. I believe that most of these women needed support to get to some of the answers they gave. They needed to feel an authentic sense of listening, not just a sincere presence of someone demonstrating interest. They needed to believe that

someone really wanted to hear where they might go with the answer, especially when they didn't know where they were going, and they might not be satisfied when they arrived. This is the kind of vigilance and support that hooks talks about in pushing beyond the White supremacist tendencies that will stop these women from traveling to unknown parts of their racial identity.

Joining *polite avoidance* with other scholarly concepts

The *polite avoidance* cited in my analysis resulted from disorienting dilemmas for some, and perhaps the reflection of a habit of deferring from the subject for others. In many of the examples, the respondents never seemed to notice when they were practicing the concept of avoiding the discussion of whiteness. The literature offered what may be other reasons.

I asked these women to explore *habits of mind* about leadership and whiteness that might guide their action. This is Mezirow's (2000) term for a set of assumptions – broad, generalized, orienting predispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience. He says that habits of mind become expressed as a point of view. We change our point of view by trying on another's point of view. He believes we are unable to do this with a habit of mind, and I believe that is where women using *polite avoidance* wanted to settle in. I believe that the women who struggled the most, yet stayed with these questions, were pushing their way into and beyond quite unexplored habits of mind. I also believe this struggle is a form of learning, and is necessary for women leaders to ever get to Mezirow's *transformative learning* stage. That is the process, as he sees it, by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference

(meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mindsets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.

Other possible reasons from the literature for *polite avoidance* come from the field of whiteness study. Few White Americans mention whiteness as a quality they think much about (Stowe, 1966), with a kind of emptiness at the core of whiteness. If White is emptied of its content, however, it drifts comfortably back into an invisible, neutral, intangible state (Frankenberg, 1993; Maher & Tetrault, 1998; Wildman, 1996), into the air, devoid of any characteristic, advantage or flaw. At this point, many of my respondents turned to the mix of identities we all possess. The women could choose their subject, their type of struggle based on gender or class, sexual orientation or even, in one case, a sense of discrimination based on her own race.

The WRIAS approach

The choices these respondents made about the stories they told helped lend value to the more quantifiable method of inquiry in Helms' WRIAS scale. There are clear limitations to a measure that allows answers only along a Likert scale, which is the essence of the design of this measurement tool. In my case, her numerical standard added balance to the qualitative perspective. Nothing in the design of the WRIAS inquiry could show me how the women came up against their denial or problematic moments. Nothing in the design of the qualitative research, within reason and with only this one researcher, would allow me to consistently assess the dozens of subjects touched on in the 60

WRIAS questions. I suggest several examples of WRIAS subjects that are embedded in some of its questionnaire statements, and that deserve further qualitative study:

“There is nothing I can do by myself to solve society’s racial problems.”

“I would rather socialize with Whites only.”

“A person’s race is not important to me.”

“When I am the only White in a group of Blacks, I feel anxious.”

In the end, the findings of the two methods reinforced each other. PMMY registered their highest scores at the highest end of the WRIAS identity development scale. All 12 women had their highest scores in the higher half of the range, at *pseudo-independence* or higher. The presence in the earliest status of *contact* for Shirley and Wallis, with their second highest scores, correlated with their absence in the AW category and their predominance in the DW and PA categories.

Joining the domains: White, women and leader

A very limited amount of available research combined my three domains of whiteness, women and leadership. In fact, usually only two of those domains coexisted in the literature. Whiteness was the most elusive domain. Even when the term was included in a description of research, it was rarely a primary focus of the study. Occasionally, White served as a label or descriptor and was never studied at all. Women and leadership as a combination, however, offered fertile ground for review and interpretation. This was especially true in more recent material on women who demonstrate leadership characteristics outside of traditional male models (Annis, 2003; Bell and Nkomo, 2001;

Fletcher, 1999; Helgesen, 1995, 2005; Meyerson, 2001, among others). I offer a few examples.

My data showed women with general leadership strengths that did not always endure when they began to discuss race, especially their own. For some, leadership was lacking and they openly lamented the absence, the feeling of ineffectiveness. For others, leadership was not disappearing necessarily, it was morphing. Meyerson's (2001) characterization of leaders as *tempered radicals*, or the quieter rebels and change agents, became more obvious in some cases. The general leadership strengths that collected around this behind-the-scenes and between-the-lines influence became more personal and specific when whiteness or race came into the discussion. While this might signal the more relational and cognitive strengths of women in leadership, the shift also has a slippery downside. Personal, quieter *tempered radicals* don't care as much about who gets credit for actions and accomplishments, as long as they occur. This makes accountability for progress difficult for such a *radical* to document when a researcher like myself asks about individual effort. In addition, whiteness scholars might view this shift as unproductive societal tendency toward individualism (McIntosh, 1990; Tatum, 1997; Wellman, 1977; Wildman, 1996). Scholars might also see here a reluctance to take on, even collectively, systemic or institutional privilege, power or racism (Agar, 1994; Carter, 2000; Lipsitz, 1995).

Bell and Nkomo (2001) compare Black and White women leadership characteristics. They talk about White women leaders who were less prepared for the discrimination they would experience. They were less angry, less frustrated, less outspoken and more willing to acquiesce to the White male-dominated environment.

None of my respondents reported to a male in their professional work setting, which may have changed my findings if they had been in such relationships. Still, my respondents displayed many of these same characteristics of less prepared, less angry, less outspoken, and the like, in their associations with their own White race. I interpret this as the effect of a dominant culture, in whatever form, and the denial they can choose to use. The male context may have been pushed aside, yet the whiteness context remains. These *less-than* characteristics correlate with the behavior of most respondents in recent examples to lead, or even participate in, action that investigated whiteness or moved against racism.

The characteristics of my respondents and those of Bell & Nkomo revealed additional insight. Their White women leaders, again in comparison to Black women leaders, were change agents who rarely focused on injustice, racial or otherwise. Even with organizational diversity initiatives, White women set their vision higher, “soaring above the painful landscape of racism, sexism, and oppression” (p. 181). In their predominance of NSW/DW/PA categories (dealing with the range of not seeing to avoiding whiteness), my respondents did some soaring of their own, this time outside of their own whiteness. Instead of approaching the deep roots of the problem, as Bell & Nkomo’s Black women leaders often did, my respondents were usually more comfortable outside of the issue. Except for the notable PMMY exceptions, my respondents were much more likely to take whiteness questions and focus instead on broader diversity in a more cognitive, sometimes gender-based, way. They would neutralize the deeper cultural and historical dimensions, ignoring White as racial and go beyond it. This neutralizing and ignoring, or setting aside or dismissing might help restore a sense of emotional

equilibrium in the discussion, but did little to help resolve or even recognize the deeper issues of White power and privilege.

One last point of comparison offers a more hopeful perspective. Bell & Nkomo's White women could see themselves fitting into their organization and held a stronger belief in a meritocracy. This meritocracy was based on their assumption that the playing field is equal for all players, or at least on their continued hope that it could be. As long as the workplace is perceived as fair game, there was less of a driving urge to make changes. My respondents, at least in their immediate professional environments, had chosen another playing field – one without men to supervise them. Those same women had taken another step in choosing to become more formally educated about creating alliances across race. Those same women acted with very little hesitation in agreeing to be a part of this study on whiteness. Perhaps my data on these women is a set of stories about what is still a part of anyone as s/he seeks a higher state of existence: Stories about the disorienting dilemmas and problematic moments and contradictions that come with change and with learning. Contradictions of self, that is, one who has to disengage from the dysfunctional aspects of values and beliefs that might otherwise work well for her (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). And contradictions of culture, that is, a foundational ideology promoting individualism and equality that masks a power and privilege often so invisibly housed within one race (Frankenberg, 1993; McIntosh, 1990; Wildman, 1996; Wellman 1977).

White identity was the focus of my research, and it was only one of many identities for these women, and always a secondary identity at best. The womanist identity usually dominated. A term proposed by Walker (1983), womanist links to Black

feminism primarily, while its use has come to include feminism beyond the boundaries of race and class. Parks et al (1996) noted that development of racial identity and womanist identity is different for White women:

Whereas racial identity development occurs from a position of social, economic and political power for these women, gender identity is formed from a culturally subordinate position. As Whites, they have their own inherited racist attitudes and the consequences of being White in a racist society. Racially, they belong to the dominant (oppressor) group and a choice about how to, or not to, forge a positive White identity. However, they are also free, as members of the socially powerful race, to withdraw and to stop the process at any point. The culturally subordinate position of gender helps give women a clearer sense of inequity, of what they wish or desire about the power they don't have. They are in a position to feel the disadvantages. In the case of two of my respondents who were out as lesbians, their experience as lesbians and the accompanying sense of inequity was also a primary identity. Unlike the situation with race, White women rarely can avoid cross-gender contact with the socially dominant group that could stifle a womanist identity development. At the same time White women can reinforce a White racial development that spans the two genders since the other gender is often still White as well.

In the end, White women's identity developmental tasks are not only different from other groups, but possibly conflicting. This process of choosing whether to work at dismantling their racism, build their White identity, or reinforce attention to their womanist and or lesbian identity was an alternating one. My research focus, for the sake of investigation, was to pull these identities apart in discussion when the identities

intersect in reality. My research pushed them to think about the one identity that normally might cause them the least concern. *Polite avoidance* is not difficult to understand in such a contradictory environment. Still, in this discombobulated existence of selves and identities, *polite avoidance* is understandable as an escape valve. It is not a solution.

Argyris helped me remember that these respondents are both women and leaders, and as such need to be part of a different conversation. Leaders for him have a responsibility to make issues more explicit, to test assumptions and to value attributions and evaluations (Argyris, 2000). Leaders should push at those identity conflicts and find the room for reflection and action. Burns (1978, 2003) sees this kind of cross-cultural analysis as a breakthrough in the field of leadership. I am reminded of the importance that exists not only in sustaining the leader role for those who identity as such, but of maintaining the integrity of that role.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion and Future Direction

This research project began with the assumption that our racial identity contributes to our understanding of race. Racial identity informs how we view ourselves, and how we consider race relations. Racial identity informs how or whether we act on individual, cultural and institutional levels regarding leadership in a multiracial society. These statements assume that we find meaning in a racial identity, that the term contributes to a sense of who we think we are. This research also considered that racial identity can be something that we may not be able to talk about – yet it explains, or is triggered in certain social situations. At various levels, participants found meaning in their racial identity that can be significant for the larger population they represent. This meaning usually did not become conscious for most of these women, however, unless they were making choices to employ it, or deny it, or until they were asked to look for it.

When these self-identified leaders spoke about their whiteness, they shared knowledge about what racial identity meant to them and about the way they lead. Their sense of quality leadership frequently linked to a sense of relationship, as shown in how often they cited relational elements such as *collaborative*, *facilitative*, or *encouraging* as key to their leadership. Their ability to articulate a White racial identity associates with

their leadership traits involving race. Their sense of the absence, confusion or denial of racial identity created barriers to their leadership strengths. This developing understanding of racial identity can include a developing understanding of how they use their often invisible power and position around the issues of race and racism.

The responses of these women also indicated that knowledge of racial identity contributed in some way to a sense of relationship across race, as well as obstacles to relationship across race. Social scientists tie this sense of relationship to building *social capital*, which they see as both essential and lacking in the changing character of American society. Social capital is variously described on a small scale and on larger scales. In the smaller realm, social capital is relationships that promote beliefs and trust and reciprocity. In the larger sense, it is networks and norms that enable people to act together to pursue shared objectives (Ostrom & Ahn, 2003; Putnam, 2000). I conclude that some of these women were developing social capital across race at an early age; my research shows this with three respondents as early as age 5. Their experience and investment paid off appreciably in this analysis. Other stories demonstrated how talking *about* social capital or talking *about* situations without sustained personal involvement, was not the equivalent of building or investing in relationships. Half of this group remembers only observation or talk, with no personal relationship, as a first memory of race. Nearly half of the group recalled situations that had little to do with building social capital when they talked about leading on issues of privilege or power, or a sense of their racial identity changing, or initiating or joining challenges against racism. They consistently told stories where they had chosen to remain outside of social capital-investment opportunities.

My overarching findings in this research are two-fold: White women leaders experience difficulty in addressing issues of their whiteness and tend to set aside numerous leadership characteristics they have defined for themselves when dealing with issues of race. Secondly, a significant life experience correlates with this finding: Women leaders who successfully recalled the details of positive early childhood relationships with children of color demonstrated a significantly higher ability to both address their whiteness and retain and use their sense of initiative and leadership skills across race.

In looking ahead, I discuss what may affect further research, including perspective on myself as researcher. The sharing of stories allowed women to reflect on White racial identity and leadership. The sharing occurred in an environment that encouraged conversation, and that may not have been routine for either the women or the subject matter. A word about referring to these women as a single group or case: None of these women participated as a group in this research. They were approached individually. I honored confidentiality by not introducing them to each other. They do, however, represent an aggregate with a common experience of a workshop format on diversity as well as this research. As a purposeful sample, their prior participation in one of the workshops I've described likely represents a skewed population, which contributes to the limitations of this research design. As individuals, they were in different experiential places and exhibited different ways of thinking and behaving. With these qualifying elements in mind, and for future research, I consider some of the salient messages in their stories and experiences.

Meeting the resistance: Nourishing both dilemma and openness

Without these respondents, there would be no stories, no talk, no discovery, no connection to action or illustration of its absence. Without further talk and discovery and relating across difference, there will be no real advancements in whiteness work, particularly beyond academia. The outcomes of this research would not have been possible without the willingness, honesty and energy they provided. Their behavior was a model of what can and should come next in this research.

The women were, without exception, prompt and forthcoming, with sincere efforts to be detailed, open and earnest. Observations of emotional reactions across the board showed none of these women angry, although that was an observation of behavior, and not attitude, since I could not observe attitudes. At some point, sometimes frequently, each seemed fearful and, at other points, frustrated about their thoughts or their responses. Their response might be to ask for a repeat of the question, or an expression of bewilderment. Still, they rarely ever balked at trying to answer.

As self-defined leaders, these women appreciated and demonstrated the concept of *making a difference*, as in being agents of positive change or growth in society. They often found their own incentives to do so in their descriptions of how they led. As with many people, especially professionals, they saw themselves as capable and sophisticated, and were invested in this image and their sense of self-worth (Goodman, 2001). Across areas of race and their own whiteness, however, these incentives of my respondents played out in varying degrees that were not always related to their definitions of themselves as leaders. Sometimes the incentives seemed to disappear, as described in the analysis. Similarly to Goodman's findings, they may step away from leadership on diversity issues

that could undermine their sense of competence and control, or put them at risk of feeling ignorant, foolish or naïve.

The respondents may not have recognized the significance of this dissonance since the information sharing that created it occurred across a long span of conversation. In some cases, the information came in two completely different settings scheduled weeks apart.

Most importantly, these problematic moments signaled moments of discovery. For this and future research, these moments needed to be welcomed and accommodated. I needed these moments to help identify times of conflict in identifying with one's race, and to help pave the way for successful research. I also needed an environment that was as safe as possible for these transitional moments or dilemmas to occur wherever necessary. I wanted to allow a context in which White women leaders could wander around, struggle with, and examine their own sense of racial identity and whiteness. I wanted to help create a setting where they would not turn away from the subject, resist or shut down, which is a choice that I believe the privilege and place of White women regularly allows them to do. I wanted them to talk about what they believed, what they were taught and what they did or didn't do, even when the responses contradicted each other. The spectrum from personal virtuous behavior to systemic racist behavior houses countless subtle contradictions, and lots of land mines. This meant the setting needed to be comfortable, with few distractions, with my total attention and interest in hearing the stories that came in efforts to answer the questions.

Lichtenberg (2005) writes about the emotionally and physically draining aspects for women leaders of trying to be what they are not. I suspect that being contradictory in our beliefs and behaviors is equally cumbersome. By that, I mean White women avoiding

all that they are as members of a race. Their socialization allows them to pull this off, particularly as they associate in primarily White environments. She argues that imitating culture that is not their own, and I would add denying a culture that is, pulls women leaders down and makes it easy to feel like a victim. This reinforces feelings of powerlessness. In such challenging times, “We give ourselves permission to be smaller, duller, and less complete than we otherwise could be” (p. 5). As seeming victims, who could also choose to set aside leadership strengths they had claimed earlier (or experiences across race, or life in sustained integrated situations or neighborhoods) or whatever might have been absent or problematic for these respondents, they could let themselves off the hook.

What seemed to happen for many of these women, which Lichtenberg also experienced in looking at gender identity, is that once they verbalized the contradiction or dilemma or problem that held them back, they were making a positive step toward owning that problem or filling that void, or even building social capital. My respondents increased their chances of noticing White as something significant. Instead of a somewhat lost and discredited word, they could re-learn to use it to make more sense of what is going on in society. Societal racism still presents itself as more pervasive and powerful. Yet they could begin to understand that dealing across race is not just about confronting political, economic and social systems that shape us. They began to touch not only the “enormous forces that were ‘out there’ but were, despite their best intentions, inside of them” (Breines, 2006, p. 1999). If they began to own these situations of their whiteness, their consciousness became a tool of action. They could push through resistance and move in a more socially just and anti-racist direction.

Moments of resistance were easier to transcend with a study design that made allowances for a safe, relatively comfortable environment. Other moments required persistence in efforts to get an answer that even related to the question. Still other moments required acknowledgment that an answer was not forthcoming. Even if the essence of the answer drifted, I persuaded against verbal avoidance of the question. For this research design, these incidents of avoidance were key to an understanding of how whiteness works. I am respectful of how unlike reality this scenario may have been for these respondents, where a discussion about race might seem unsafe or threatening, and a discussion about whiteness is at the least unknown, and likely feared. In some cases, some could recall situations of being ridiculed when they tried. I was often in awe of conversations we were having that do not happen, or that are not sustained elsewhere in their lives. I was also in awe of how connected the women stayed to this experience, without exception, throughout the entire process. This experience implies a need for this research method to find its way to more women. In an ideal world, the structure would no longer be needed and the conversation and learning would be commonplace.

From personal experience to the larger learning in this whiteness research

Individuals in my experience who put themselves in anti-racism training or other forms of learning about race relations often are looking for *tools*. They want devices, tricks or behavior or attitude reminders that will help them understand and grow. This study tried to go deeper, to review what stays in place even after the tools are hauled out and tried out. This research helps acknowledge the frame of mind of some White women leaders as they seek those tools. I look at this frame of mind with an example from my own personal

experience. Colleagues and I who work across race experience problematic moments with some frequency. We find them moving, revealing and quite educational, but only when they are acknowledged. Until they are acknowledged, they are not publicly known and are not recognized as significant. They deserve this legitimacy to become the kind of *tools* we really can use.

My example involved a planning meeting with a potential client group. Four of us were present, two African-American women and two White women. My African-American colleague and I had agreed that I would manage our pre-set agenda for this meeting. At one point far into the meeting, I made an attempt to move the group back onto the agenda, by my interpretation. Immediately before my action, my colleague had suggested movement that would advance our agenda to another subject. I had not fully recognized her statement as a direction to advance the agenda. Others at the table stopped, experienced the dissonance, and responded with mild laughter. Problematic moments can end there, or be re-run and debriefed, as my colleague and I chose to do after that meeting. She had felt shunted in a way that mirrored her fears and her past experience in working with dominant culture White women who do not see the negative effects of their actions in mixed-race situations. I had felt a commitment to an agenda, and had interpreted her statement as conversation outside of that agenda priority. Our relationship and our ability to lead in our work across race were considerably enhanced by the re-enactment and review of that situation.

I needed to better understand my own expectations about leading in a situation before any *tools* were going to be helpful. I realized that subconsciously I believed I was expected to move the situation forward, even if my colleague was in charge and had made

her move forward already. Until I could sense that entrenched dominant attitude about how to behave, and even to help the less fortunate, and see these attitudes based in my whiteness, until I could feel that subconscious engine running, no added tools were going to make much difference. As Hilary said about her own learning about whiteness:

My best leadership skills come out of resisting being an unthinking member of the White race. Maybe part of my privilege is having developed some self confidence, and that contributes to leadership. What I need to stretch toward to be a leader is to undo my confidence and be a learner. Learning comes from an uncomfortable place, from realizing you don't know something, from being called a little bit on something. Maybe something you weren't being aware of... It can be scary to confront what you don't know, what you don't understand. Or what you might need to unlearn.

These women showed repeatedly a capacity for learning. Perhaps this is characteristic of all human behavior. Yet I have felt resistance to learning about this subject from others that gives particular significance to the capacity of these women. Their responses and their behavior regarding a learning mode were repeatedly present. Some women stayed more on task in answering questions than others. All of the women wandered off subject more than once. They were being asked to tell stories. For me, storytelling provided the comfort zone of communication amid the discomfort of some of my subject matter. Some of my questions even discouraged comfort and were designed to dislodge it. I valued the maintenance of this comfort zone to surround the discomfort that can come with new learning. I was not the teacher here; I was the student. I often supported the comfort zone with monosyllabic tones of acknowledgment or body language and eye contact that demonstrated interest. Throughout this experience, I observed these women engaged in a process of searching, of finding the subject at hand, perhaps for the first time.

The willingness of most to explore outside of a constraining system and set of ideas about race was apparent. This happened alongside their frustration with a lack of support, as well as their pressures not to seriously intrude on a status quo that benefited them. As an aggregate group, they demonstrated a capacity to recognize or change a present state and desire to be at/in another state. They could simultaneously be at a level of understanding that is commensurate with other White women, whatever their level might be, and also push beyond that level. The effectiveness or level of their understanding of whiteness is not the issue as much as their attitude about growth and development. By this, I mean their desire to be educated and to move along a spectrum of racial identity development. This desire was present for all of the women. The dilemma for them was in the movement needed to continue on that spectrum in both a learning and action-oriented capacity. The dilemma also was in finding support and encouragement they said they needed to continue. Their capacity for development was tied to the same collaborative and alliance-building nature that was a part of much of their professed leadership styles.

Looking back at the design

In hindsight, I would be more deliberate about noting, even journaling the times when my White status quo allowed me to say what was enough and when it was enough. At any point, in spite of a committee's constant urging, I could avoid further questioning, further investigating, stay in the middle of the road rather than push on to further discovery. I would try to be more conscious of my whiteness at work, when my power and privilege as a White researcher were in play, and to log those occasions as they occurred. Examples might be to sidestep discomfort and choose inaction in an interview situation, to

suspend requests for clarification from respondents, or to overlook unearned privilege in others because it was so prevalent in my behavior as well.

I would have relished the time and resources to study a larger sample.

After repeated use of the interview protocol, I would change language in three of the questions. Examples follow with the suggested changes listed in italics.

4A. Did religion and/or ethnicity play a strong role in your family traditions?

4A. Did religion and/or ethnicity play a role in your family traditions?

15A. Have your ideas about race have changed through the years?

15A. How have your ideas about race changed through the years?

9B. Do you sense a responsibility or commitment to women leaders from other racial groups?

9B. Do you sense in yourself a responsibility or commitment to women leaders from other racial groups?

Lastly, I will be blessed with the wisdom of other readers who will assess what I have tried to do, and the feedback of my respondents. It would have been rewarding to begin with the benefits of that critique. I hope the critiques are all mindful, and that they are indeed critical. I feel quite confident that they will keep me in forward motion, and that is a very constructive place to be.

What I learned

A year after the hurricanes mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, this country's leadership is still trying to come to grips with its reality. The moral messages of this crisis speak on many levels. The messages bring inconvenient truths, to quote a current media title, that take courage to hear and act upon. This research project deals with an element of our national identity and personal identities as White women that is not easy to

keep in focus, let alone act upon. If oppressive attitudes and behaviors were obvious and simple issues for a dominant culture, we would not need in-depth studies like this.

I have learned that when I looked for a sense of racial identity among these White women leaders, I often felt I was the first to ever ask. I sensed that these women had not given questions about whiteness much previous thought, that their answers were forming on the spot. I sensed that not many others would be following me to ask again. My dream is to see each of us abandon this unwritten rule against discussing racial positioning. My dream is that those of us with racial privilege who so earnestly want not to discriminate will investigate how we still are, especially when we maintain a status quo by doing nothing. This power we have to avoid or to dismiss issues, or to opt out is a privilege. It is also a choice, and we can choose other ways. As with issues of our earth's environment, this is talk about a change in lifestyle – a White lifestyle.

I learned that I am driven by a hope that these women, as leaders, will study that lifestyle and find the courage to keep asking and keep raising their level of moral commitment to examining themselves as racial beings. I would like to believe that this courage is developing into part of how they see themselves as leaders. I am convinced we all set an example when this happens, of how to grow as a society.

From the goal of this research to next steps

My goal in this study was to contribute to the body of knowledge about race relations in this country. More specifically, I intended to give White women leaders a forum to share how their membership in a White race affects how they lead. As expected, I did find a body of knowledge that is very much in front of us, perhaps quite unnoticed.

That knowledge was essential to the way these women make decisions and choose to have an impact, or choose inaction or indecision. Such knowledge could have an impact on how all White women choose to make decisions, and to *be* in their various roles.

For many of the women who had meaningful relationships across race later in life or maintain them today, this research may help them realize more about how important those relationships might be. For the women in my study who lamented not being in a location, an environment or a position to build relationship across race, perhaps the incentive to exert more control over those barriers will grow. At minimum, I have much incentive to look at this relationship phenomena on a larger scale. This larger look could come in the form of repeating the protocol of this research with additional White women. Women who have not attended any workshop or forum on whiteness issues or work across race are a large and important base for further research. Other formats could come as workshops where women are encouraged to consider this protocol in a single setting with facilitation. Laptop technology could allow women to participate online. Lastly, of course, this story is not about women alone.

What can this connection mean for those interested in the field of race relations or whiteness study? Consultants, or scholars, or anyone caring about these issues, would have a new interest as a result of this research. There is encouragement here to listen more closely to personal stories about memories of race and see significance in stories about personal relationships as opposed to those about situations or observations. Early childhood friendships across race, for those who identify as White, would mean something worthwhile in a new way. There is value in knowing if or how a people might remember such friendships and what they might say about their impact. Those responsible for the

experiences of young children can witness a new incentive to create sustained cross-race environments, and not just in school or other formal settings.

In studying traits of leadership, I would probe more closely to see how those traits sustain themselves across race, and what happens when they are considered through a whiteness lens. This is an ongoing task, and the subject matter can slip out of focus. I would have more confidence about keeping on the topic if the women veered from a connection to their White identity.

To move ahead in this discovery process of the meaning of our identity as White, this kind of discussion is essential. The dialogue will need to occur with less resistance and more encouragement. Action that follows the dialogue will need to be welcomed and seen as a necessary form of social awareness. Investments in this kind of social capital (i.e. as in bridging, or maintaining relationships) need to be seen as highly desirable. The foundational sense of equality in our national culture and history must be viewed through the lens of all that exists, including members of the dominant White population seeing all that they represent. That equality will not be achieved until we can talk and act on our broadest knowledge about whiteness when we talk about race, about maleness when we talk about gender, and heterosexuality when we talk about sexual orientation. I began this thesis with a reference to those who have the most tickets. Only as we recognize and act on elements of oppression from all angles, will those ticket holders shift closer to an equitable solution.

This research project has taken the focus off people of color and put it on Whites. This is risky business. Without some parameters, my time and effort and that of my respondents simply keeps us as Whites in the center of attention. Unless this work ties to

issues of equality and justice, and anti-racism, my effort arguably can be seen as a self-indulgent exercise for members of the dominant group without dealing with the oppression that they are allowing and often perpetuating. So what can be done with this knowledge?

What can White women do to be more effective as leaders?

As I reflect on the stories these women have told, and how much they have taught me in hundreds of pages of transcripts, I begin to see the potential impact on all White women leaders. I understand much more about why racial development is so essential to the effectiveness of their leadership. I see more of what can be done. I offer some examples.

Learn to recognize whiteness. Practice knowing oneself as a racial being. Understand that Whites have a racial identity and it has value. Listen to the voices of those who are not White. Recognize that the product of this effort is in the unending process of learning and acting, and that it is a life-long struggle. See a recognition of whiteness as a labor of love, fairness and justice.

Work toward a level of racial consciousness that is denied or set aside in our socialization. Build on a sense of trust and alliance across race that most of these White women leaders have never known. Initiate, develop and maintain relationships and bridge-building across race. Expect experiences to be slow, even messy. Look out for what gets in the way.

Move along with less fear of the unknown. See mistakes as moments of learning. Build social capital. Reduce social distance. Recognize choices Whites make at the expense of those who are not White, and the power that comes with being able to make those choices. Talk about these things. Expect resistance. Articulate the unearned

privilege that Whites possess as a race and can so easily ignore. Read. Admit that White ignorance comes at a price.

I am part of numerous groups of White women trying to recognize our thinking and behavior around race in a culture dominated by White-male-controlled organizations. We do not experience encouragement within these organizations to think collectively about how to change such an existing system of control. We spent decades looking at the resources that humans can bring to organizational development from a gender perspective. Since the Civil Rights era nearly a half-century ago, we looked more intently at what diversity from races other than White can bring. This research can help us see the impact of knowing our White identity and making decisions based on that broader knowledge. This research advances the field of whiteness studies, in particular, beyond subjects and respondents who are students, or scholars or practitioners.

These professional women leaders represent a growing segment of our population who have had an impact through their ability to incorporate and accommodate others. With these women who have helped us know ourselves and the behavior of Whites better as members of a race, Whites can move to accommodate their more total selves. Recognizing whiteness, what it means, how Whites enact it and how they can develop will enable them to be leaders for reasons that few of these women mentioned in their descriptions of themselves – for the sake of equity and for justice.

Appendix A

Example of the growth of scholarly writing in whiteness studies

The following table represents a tabulation of the dates of publication of articles that appeared in two volumes on critical whiteness studies:

Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge, published in 1995 and its sequel, *Critical White Studies*, published in 1997.

Article publication year	Number of articles in 1995 edition	Number of articles in 1997 edition	Total number of articles in each year	Percentage (rounded) of all articles published
Before 1980	1	4	5	3
1980	0	0	0	0
1981	1	2	3	2
1982	1	0	1	.6
1983	0	1	1	.6
1984	0	0	0	0
1985	2	1	3	2
1986	0	1	1	.6
1987	1	0	1	.6
1988	2	3	5	3
1989	6	2	8	5
1990	8	5	13	8
1991	8	8	16	10
1992	6	5	11	7
1993	10	13	23	14
1994	2	9	11	7
1995	2	31	33	20
1996	n.a.	24	24	15
Date not listed	0	5	5	3
TOTAL	50	114	164	

Appendix B

White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS)

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
(circle here)					
1	2	3	4	5	1.. I hardly ever think about what race I am.
1	2	3	4	5	2. There is nothing I can do by myself to solve society's racial problems.
1	2	3	4	5	3. I get angry when I think about how Whites have been treated by Blacks.
1	2	3	4	5	4. I feel as comfortable around Blacks as I do around Whites.
1	2	3	4	5	5. I am making a special effort to understand the significance of being White.
1	2	3	4	5	6. I involve myself in causes regardless of the race of the people involved in them.
1	2	3	4	5	7. I find myself watching Black people to see what they are like.
1	2	3	4	5	8. I feel depressed after I have been around Black people.
1	2	3	4	5	9. There is nothing that I want to learn about Blacks.
1	2	3	4	5	10. I enjoy watching the different ways that Blacks and Whites approach life.
1	2	3	4	5	11. I am taking definite steps to define an identity for myself that includes working against racism.
1	2	3	4	5	12. I seek out new experiences even if I know that no other Whites will be involved in them.
1	2	3	4	5	13. I wish I had more Black friends.
1	2	3	4	5	14. I do not believe that I have the social skills to interact with Black people effectively.
1	2	3	4	5	15. A Black person who tries to get close to you is usually after something.
1	2	3	4	5	16. Blacks and Whites have much to learn from each other.
1	2	3	4	5	17. Rather than focusing on other races, I am searching for information to help me understand White people.
1	2	3	4	5	18. Black people and I share jokes with each other about our racial experiences.
1	2	3	4	5	19. I think Black people and White people do not differ from each other in any important ways.
1	2	3	4	5	20. I just refuse to participate in discussions about race.

					Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5					
1	2	3	4	5		21.	I would rather socialize with Whites only.		
1	2	3	4	5		22.	I believe that Blacks would not be different from Whites if they had been given the same opportunities.		
1	2	3	4	5		23.	I believe that I receive special privileges because I am White.		
1	2	3	4	5		24.	When a Black person holds an opinion with which I disagree, I am not afraid to express my opinion.		
1	2	3	4	5		25.	I do not notice a person's race.		
1	2	3	4	5		26.	I have come to believe that Black and White people are very different.		
1	2	3	4	5		27.	White people have tried extremely hard to make up for their ancestors' mistreatment of Blacks. Now it is time to stop!		
1	2	3	4	5		28.	It is possible for Blacks and Whites to have meaningful social relationships with each other.		
1	2	3	4	5		29.	I am making an effort to decide what type of White person I want to be.		
1	2	3	4	5		30.	I feel comfortable in social settings in which there are no Black people.		
1	2	3	4	5		31.	I am curious to learn in what ways Black people and White people differ from each other.		
1	2	3	4	5		32.	I do not express some of my beliefs about race because I do not want to make White people mad at me.		
1	2	3	4	5		33.	Society may have been unfair to Blacks, but it has been just as unfair to Whites.		
1	2	3	4	5		34.	I am knowledgeable about which values Blacks and Whites share.		
1	2	3	4	5		35.	I am examining how racism relates to who I am.		
1	2	3	4	5		36.	I am comfortable being myself in situations in which there are no other White people.		
1	2	3	4	5		37.	In my family, we never talk about race.		
1	2	3	4	5		38.	When I interact with Black people, I usually let them make the first move because I do not want to offend them.		
1	2	3	4	5		39.	I feel hostile when I am around Blacks.		
1	2	3	4	5		40.	I believe that Black people know more about racism than I do.		
1	2	3	4	5		41.	I am involved in discovering how other White people have positively defined themselves as White people.		
1	2	3	4	5		42.	I have refused to accept privileges that were given to me because I am White.		
1	2	3	4	5		43.	A person's race is not important to me.		
1	2	3	4	5		44.	Sometimes I am not sure what I think or feel about White people.		

					Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5					
1	2	3	4	5	45.	I believe that Blacks are inferior to Whites.			
1	2	3	4	5	46.	I believe that a White person cannot be a racist if he or she has a Black friend(s).			
1	2	3	4	5	47.	I am becoming aware of the strengths and limitations of my White culture.			
1	2	3	4	5	48.	I think that White people must end racism in this country because they created it.			
1	2	3	4	5	49.	I think that dating Black people is a good way for White people to learn about Black culture.			
1	2	3	4	5	50.	Sometimes I am not sure what I think or feel about Black people.			
1	2	3	4	5	51.	When I am the only White in a group of Blacks, I feel anxious.			
1	2	3	4	5	52.	Blacks and Whites differ from each other in some ways, but neither race is superior.			
1	2	3	4	5	53.	Given the chance, I would work with other White people to discover what being White means to me.			
1	2	3	4	5	54.	I am not embarrassed to say that I am White.			
1	2	3	4	5	55.	I think White people should become more involved in socializing with Blacks.			
1	2	3	4	5	56.	I do not understand why Black people blame me for their social misfortunes.			
1	2	3	4	5	57.	I believe that Whites are more attractive and express themselves better than Blacks.			
1	2	3	4	5	58.	I believe that White people cannot have a meaningful discussion about racism unless there is a Black or other minority person present to help them understand the effects of racism.			
1	2	3	4	5	59.	I am considering changing some of my behaviors because I think that they are racist.			
1	2	3	4	5	60.	I am continually examining myself to make sure that my way of being White is not racist.			
					61.	Estimate the percentages of your neighbors that are in each of the following groups:			

_____ Asian _____ Black _____ Hispanic

_____ Native American _____ White

62. Indicate the numbers of your closest friends who are members of the following groups:

_____ Asian _____ Black _____ Hispanic

_____ Native American _____ White

Appendix C

Letter to members of candidate pool

Dear xx,

I am very pleased to share that my research proposal has been accepted and I am now in the final phase of my doctoral work. I would like to invite you to join me in this phase.

Together we would look closely at the meaning of racial identity for white women leaders. For my dissertation, I will interview a small group of those who have participated in our *Building Alliances* workshops for women leaders. As a participant in a workshop, I'm asking you to consider joining my dissertation research group. My premise is that race shapes white women leader's lives in ways that are important. In particular, I'll look at how notions about race connect with ideas about collaborative leadership and alliances across race. I know I have a great deal to learn about women's lives when viewed in this way. One of my assumptions is that much in our society has discouraged us from exploring that part of ourselves.

I will interview each participant individually two times in the course of two months. Each interview will last about an hour at a time and place of mutual convenience. All data will be used with utmost attention to privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. Neither actual names nor titles will be used in any published form of my research.

After 25 years at this wonderful work (and three years at this doctorate), I've at least learned that the learning never stops. I hope you'll consider joining the group, helping me out, and perhaps helping yourself. If you would like to learn more, I welcome the chance to share more detail. Kindly call me or email.

Sincerely,

Ann Moritz
(with contact information)

Appendix D

Advance questionnaire to respondents

These questions constitute a brief questionnaire that was sent to respondents to be answered and mailed back before our first meeting. These questions deal with historical, demographic data and their concept of the leadership role(s) they hold.

1. Your date of birth:
2. Where were you born?
3. Did you grow up in any other location(s)?
4. Language(s) spoken at home both as a child and now?
5. Your level of education?
6. How would you describe your role at work?
7. Would you describe how you see yourself as a leader
in any of your roles?

Appendix E

Interview protocol

Respondents were informed that I planned two sessions involving two separate interviews approximately two months apart. Each woman was interviewed individually and separately using a consistent interview protocol. Each interview was done in an audio-taped, 60-minute format.

In the first interview, I recorded individual relational and foundational elements. These include implications of race and being a member of a race. The interview was built on a sense of the family as the first transmitter of culture and environment for the development of identity. I requested stories about experiences with race and about identifying as white, and about defining themselves as leaders. In the first interview session, the respondent was encouraged to take specific questions home to provide more in-depth written or taped responses.

At the end of this first interview, I also gathered data through the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS), developed primarily by Helms. I administered the WRIAS questionnaire and analyzed according to Helm's scales of measurement of racial identity development.

The second interview involved a more race-specific focus on how the awareness of a racial identity affects how they think, make decisions and lead. My inquiry probed how their sense of

racial consciousness affected their leadership. Conversely, how their leadership affected their racial consciousness about being white. This interview also explored change for them and commitments to further development, in particular as development relates to Helms stages of White racial identity. Questions focused on any history of social justice, activist or racial influences, and relationships across race that helped to shape who she is as a white woman. Questions were more open-ended with encouragement to share answers as stories.

This second interview will be more reflective, with encouragement to share written notes or thoughts that occurred between interviews. This session opens more to the respondent as co-researcher. Respondent/participants were encouraged to make notes, or to keep a journal, tell stories and share further thoughts that come to mind outside of our interview sessions.

Main questions introduced core elements of the interview. Followup questions were optional and intended to encourage further thinking by the participant as needed. They helped to assure coverage of elements of main questions that might merit more careful attention.

SECTION A

Questions for first interview: Relational and foundational elements

This interview builds on a sense of the family and community as first transmitters of culture for the development of racial identity.

Script: I would like to talk with you for about an hour. I have a few questions that deal with early influences on your learning, before I move into more current influences in your adult and professional situations. I encourage you to keep any notes while we talk on subjects you might like to revisit later. These responses, as I've assured you before, will be kept anonymous. You are encouraged to take a couple of questions home and answer in writing. You are also welcome to make notes, or to keep a journal, tell stories and share further thoughts that come to mind outside of our interview sessions.

Main questions

Followup questions

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1A. I see that you were born in X. Tell me a little about your family and where you grew up? | How would you describe your own racial identity? | Is that the same answer you recall giving during the workshop? |
| 2A. What racial category did you check on the 2000 Census form? | | |
| 3A. What are your first memories of recognizing racial differences? | | |
| 4A. Did religion and/or ethnicity play a strong role in your family traditions? | How would you characterize the influence? | |
| 5A. Would you share with me your first memory of being a member of a race? | | |
| 6A. How would you describe the racial makeup of your early life associations? (Social, family, neighborhood, school) | How did they talk about your race? | How have you changed from that perspective? |
| 7A. How did your family talk about the race(s) of others? Any DOs and DON'Ts you were taught about race? | | |
| 8A. What does it mean to you to be white? | How has being white brought you any privileges or special treatment? | |
| 9A. Was there a role model in your family for resisting racism? | How? Why? | |
| 10A. Would you describe a situation when you became very conscious of your whiteness? | | |
| 11A. How would you describe the races of your closest friends and associates? | Family members? | |

Appendix E, SECTION A continued

12A. Would you describe a situation when you found yourself in the minority racially?	What did this tell you about being white?
13A. Would you share your sense of whether racism in this country has become more of a problem, less of a problem, or not changing much?	
14A. If you were not being asked about race how easily could you tell your life story without mentioning your race?	
15A. Have your ideas about race have changed through the years? If yes, describe how. If no, why not?	
16A. What events have most deeply affected your ideas about race and racism? (i.e. personal incidents, relationships, environmental factors, media images)	
17A. Has this conversation caused you to hear any old information or consider any old knowledge in new ways?	
18A. When do you last recall having a meaningful conversation about YOUR race, or race in general?	
19A. Anything you'd like to add at this point?	
20A. Any feedback for me as an interviewer?	
SET DATE FOR SECOND INTERVIEW	

Selection of possible take-home questions:

- 8A. Has being white brought you any privileges or special treatment?
- 10A. Would you describe a situation when you became very conscious of your whiteness?
- 16A. What events have most deeply affected your ideas about race and racism?
(i.e. personal incidents, relationships, environmental factors, media images as in books, movies, internet, television)
- 1B. Please describe an act of racism that you witnessed. Where you didn't intervene? Where you did?

WRIAS QUESTIONNAIRE

Racial identity attitude scale

This questionnaire was administered at the end the first meeting.

Script: This questionnaire was developed by Dr. Janet Helms and her colleagues more than 20 years ago, and has been updated since. She's been in many university settings, and is now at Boston College running her own institute. This is designed to help anonymously gather your attitudes about racial identity, and compare them to thousands of others who have also participated. The questionnaire is short and should take less than 30 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers.

White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (Form WRIAS) Helms and Carter
Helms, J. (Ed.) (1990). *Black and white racial identity: Theory, research and practice*. Westport, CT: Greenwood. Appendix III.

SECTION B

Questions for second interview: Implications across race

This interview involves a more race-specific focus on the respondent's impressions of her development as a professional, and a leader who is also a white woman. Racial identity emphasis here includes any history of social justice, activist or racial influences that have helped to shape who she is as a white woman leader. Questions will be more open-ended with encouragement to share answers in the form of experiences, anecdotes or stories.

Appendix E, SECTION B continued

Script: I would like to talk with you for about an hour about how you see and define yourself as a leader through any personal history of social justice, activist or racial influences. I encouraged you to think before we met about how you've learned from acts of racism you have witnessed. Again, the responses you give will not identify you by name.

Main questions

1B. Would you like to share any thoughts or notes or perspective on our first interview?

2B. What is good, in your mind or the way others view you, about the way you act as a leader?

3B. What kind of link do you see between being the kind of leader you are and being white?

4B. How does your role as a woman affect your sense of being a leader?

5B. In your leadership role, please describe an act of racism you witnessed.

6B. How have you used your leadership traits to lead on issues involving privilege or treatment around race?

7B. Can you describe crossing racial lines in creating close relationships?

8B. I would like to mention a few terms related to racism. I'd like for you to share what they mean to you:
institutional racism or systemic racism?
dominant culture?
white privilege?

9B. Do you sense a responsibility or commitment to women leaders
from other racial groups?

10B. How has being a leader affected your sense of being white?

How has being white affected how you behave as a
leader?

11B. In this changing world racially, how do you think your sense of your own racial identity may be different in the future?

12B. Tell me about an effort you've made to initiate
or join challenges against racism.

13B. What gets in the way of your efforts to be a better leader involving issues of race?

14B. Have stories or thoughts come to mind that have not yet been shared?

15B. Tell me about your motivation for joining this research project?

Has it changed at all since you first agreed to
participate??

16B. Is there anything you'd like to say about these subjects or about this interview experience?

Followup questions

1B. Would you like to share any thoughts or notes or perspective on our first interview?	Where you didn't intervene? Where you did?
2B. What is good, in your mind or the way others view you, about the way you act as a leader?	
3B. What kind of link do you see between being the kind of leader you are and being white?	
4B. How does your role as a woman affect your sense of being a leader?	
5B. In your leadership role, please describe an act of racism you witnessed.	
6B. How have you used your leadership traits to lead on issues involving privilege or treatment around race?	
7B. Can you describe crossing racial lines in creating close relationships?	Who tended to play the leadership role in this experience?
8B. I would like to mention a few terms related to racism. I'd like for you to share what they mean to you: institutional racism or systemic racism? dominant culture? white privilege?	
9B. Do you sense a responsibility or commitment to women leaders from other racial groups?	Would you describe it?
10B. How has being a leader affected your sense of being white?	How has being white affected how you behave as a leader?
11B. In this changing world racially, how do you think your sense of your own racial identity may be different in the future?	
12B. Tell me about an effort you've made to initiate or join challenges against racism.	
13B. What gets in the way of your efforts to be a better leader involving issues of race?	
14B. Have stories or thoughts come to mind that have not yet been shared?	
15B. Tell me about your motivation for joining this research project?	Has it changed at all since you first agreed to participate??
16B. Is there anything you'd like to say about these subjects or about this interview experience?	

Appendix F

White women leaders racial identity data gathering by subject

The questions in this interview protocol occur across two interview sessions, as shown in Appendix C. In addition, the design of these questions emphasizes three general categories: History and environment, Race relations and racial identity development, and Leadership. The table below show those categories, and pertinent questions from my interview protocol. The table begins on the left with base data that sections into the

general categories. Travelling to the right, those categories take on meaning through their related questions. Answers to those questions are supplemented with further methods of data gathering listed next to reach a final goal of answering my key questions. This table is for illustration, since the subject of some questions, and some responses, fall into more than one category. Only main questions are listed in this table.

(Table on next page)

White women leaders racial identity data gathering plan

Focus of data	Interview question	Methods	Results
History and environment	<p>1. Your date of birth: 3. Did you grow up in any other location(s)? 4. Language(s) spoken at home both as a child and now? 2A. How would you describe your own racial identity? 3A. How did your family talk about the race(s) of others? 5A. Did religion and/or ethnicity play a strong role in your family traditions? 6A. Was there a role model in your family for resisting racism? 7A. How would you describe the racial makeup of your early life associations? 9A. Would you describe a situation when you became very conscious of your whiteness?</p> <p>11A. Would you describe a situation when you found yourself in the minority racially?</p> <p>10A. How would you describe the races of your closest friends and associates?</p> <p>12A. Would you share your sense of whether racism in this country has become more/less of a problem, or not changing much?</p> <p>8A. What does it mean to you to be white?</p> <p>8A. How has being white brought you any privileges or special treatment?</p> <p>13A. How easily could you tell your life story without mentioning your race?</p> <p>14A. Describe how your ideas about race have changed through the years?</p> <p>15A. What events have most deeply affected your ideas about race and racism?</p>	<p>Record: - WRIAS -answers verbatim -attitudes expressed -assumptions made</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>How these women leaders find meaning in being White.</p> <p>To what extent that meaning of whiteness affects their sense of themselves as leaders.</p>
Race relations and racial identity development	<p>2. Where were you born? 5. Your level of education?</p> <p>1A. Would you share with me your first memory of being a member of a race? 4A. What are your first memories of recognizing racial differences?</p> <p>7B. In this changing world racially, how might your sense of your racial ID be different in the future?</p> <p>8B. Tell me about an effort you've made to initiate or join challenges against racism.</p> <p>9B. What gets in the way of your efforts to be a better leader involving issues of race?</p> <p>6. How would you describe your role at work?</p> <p>7. Describe how you see yourself as a leader in any of your roles?</p> <p>1B. In your leadership role, please describe an act of racism you witnessed.</p> <p>3B. How does your role as a woman affect your sense of being a leader?</p> <p>5B. Do you sense a responsibility to women leaders from other racial groups?</p> <p>6B. How has being a leader affected your sense of being white?</p>	<p>-recollection of behavior -taboos of discussion -observation</p> <p>-retrospective reflection</p>	
Sense of leadership			

Appendix G

Plan of analysis

The generic focus of my analysis is listed on the left. The method of connecting and linking themes is through the

comparisons listed next. The final column lists results that address my key questions.

White women leaders racial identity research plan (Analysis)

Focus of analysis	Method of comparison	Results
Themes	Problematic moments/ disorienting dilemmas/ disorienting dilemmas/critical incidents Epiphanies Color-blindness Prompted whiteness Turning points Vicarious victimization Meaning of leadership roles Indigenous themes Themes not reflected in literature	...interview data ...observation with ...retrospective reflection ...WRIAS
Connections and links	Concepts of race... Concepts of being white... WRIAS results...	How these women leaders find meaning in being White. ----- To what extent the meaning of whiteness affects White women's sense of themselves as leaders

Appendix H

Racial identity of current neighbors and close friends of each respondent

This data is requested as part of the Helms WRIAS questionnaire. The results show the racial breakdown of current neighbors and close friends of each respondent. The definition of neighbors was left to each woman to determine, which was a

stated challenge for some. This data should be seen as an estimate for several reasons: Some respondents did not list numerical answers. Some in the “closest friends” category listed percentages, others listed numbers.

Percentage of neighbors in each group

	Asian	Black	Hispanic	N.Amer.	White
Paula	20	5	0	0	75
Wallis	20	1	3	0	76
Susan	-	10	20	-	70
Hilary	0	0	0	0	100
Martha	15	25	-	-	60
Helen	10	10	0	0	70
Harriet	2	1	2	0	95
Shirley	some			mainly	
Mary	10	15	10	-	65
Zoë	5	15	15	5	50
Yvonne	5	45	15	-	35
Sandra	-	-	-	-	99
TOTAL	8%	11%	6%	>1%	74%

Closest friends in each group

	Asian	Black	Hispanic	N.Amer.	White
Paula	2%	2%	1%	0	90%
Wallis	0	0	0	0	0
Susan	1	2	1	-	10
Hilary	1	3	1	1	30
Martha	-	2	1	-	10
Helen	4	10	10	0	30-40
Harriet	-	-	-	-	100
Shirley	some	colleagues mainly	mostly		
Mary	-	3	-	-	10
Zoë	2	3	2	0	8
Yvonne	2	1	1	-	9
Sandra	2%	2%	1%	0	95%
TOTAL	19	38	23	0	

Appendix I

Informed consent form for interview and WRIAS administration

Description and Purpose: Interviews of 12 women leaders will be used for this study. I will incorporate their stories through a two-month, two session data-gathering project involving a predominantly qualitative case study approach with each respondent. Two levels of data gathering will occur. The first will involve the two interviews; the second will involve the administering of Helms White Racial Identity Attitude Scale questionnaire.

The goal of my overall research is to find the points of connection that exist across two phenomena: the meaning of being white for these women and their sense of themselves as leaders in racially diverse environments. My key assumption is that white women leaders have attitudes regarding race of which they may not be aware, and race shapes white women's lives in ways they don't always recognize. Important patterns and themes can be drawn from a collection of their stories that can add to the knowledge both of what white means as a race and how that meaning affects their leadership efforts.

My key question: How do these women leaders find meaning in being white, and what impact does that meaning have on their sense of themselves as leaders?

Procedures: Respondents will be interviewed in two sessions over a two-month period with my notes and audio tape only for recording data. Each interview is expected to last approximately one hour. In addition at the beginning, each participant will answer a questionnaire that is the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (Form WRIAS). The questionnaire is expected to require 30 minutes maximum. Respondents will be expected, but not required, to answer all questions listed in the protocol. Each subject will be interviewed individually and will be interacting only with me during interviews. The research will be done in locations comfortable geographically for each subject.

Risks: The risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are minimal, meaning they are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine psychological examinations or tests.

Anonymity: will be assured by use of code names and generic titles, both in data collecting and in analysis and writing. No actual names will be used in this research. Any possible identifying details will be altered. Collected data will remain locked and in the researcher's possession and shared with no one under any circumstances. All data will be destroyed no later than five years after completion of the research.

Participation in research is voluntary. Each candidate has the right to refuse to be in this study, and to drop out at any time.

Appendix I, continued

I have discussed with _____ the above procedures, explicitly pointing out potential risks or discomforts. I have asked whether any questions remain and have answered these questions to the best of my ability.

Date	Investigator's Signature	Print Name
------	--------------------------	------------

I am 18 years of age or older. The nature and purpose of this research have been satisfactorily explained to me and I agree to become a participant in the study as described above. I understand that I am free to discontinue participation at any time if I so choose, and that the investigator will gladly answer any questions that arise during the course of the research.

Date	Respondent's Signature	Print Name
------	------------------------	------------

The respondent will be given a copy of the signed form.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research, please sign below.

Date	Respondent's Signature	Print Name
------	------------------------	------------

Date	Principal Investigator's Signature	Print Name
------	------------------------------------	------------

A Standing Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research exists at Lesley University to which complaints or problems concerning any research project may, and should, be reported if they arise. Committee telephone: (617) 349-8529.

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ANN MORITZ

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Educational Studies. Research focus: The challenges of racial identity for White women leaders. Lesley University. 2006.

Intensive Spanish. Tufts University. 1989.

M.S. Business/Public Administration. Kent State University. Cum laude. 1975.

B.S. Journalism. University of Kansas. 1971.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Management Consultant. 1988-present. Principal, Moritz Advisory Group. Issues of cultural diversity, communications and organizational management.

Building Alliances Across Race. Executive development workshop for women leaders. Co-designer. Co-facilitator. 2004-present.

Lesley University. Spring and summer, 2006. Adjunct faculty. Intercultural Relations graduate degree program.

Northwestern University/Kellogg Graduate School of Management. Summer/fall 1988. Director, Management Training Center. Nationwide multicultural training program for newspaper managers.

The Boston Globe. 1976-88. Key positions: Assistant to The Editor, 1981-88. Managed newsroom hiring, promotions, affirmative action, development. Sunday Editor, 1978-81. Managed staff of 18.

Akron Beacon Journal. Editorial management. 1972-6.

Detroit Free Press. Summer 1971. Copy editor.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Nag's Heart Seminar. Participant. 2006.

Bystander Awareness Program. Simmons College. Participant, 2005. Trainer certification, 2006.

Citywide Dialogues. Urban League. Boston. Anti-racism trainer certification. 2003.

Visions, Inc. Four-day workshop on multiculturalism. Cambridge, MA. 2002.

CelebrateMilton! Milton, MA. Multicultural townwide annual event and focus on diversity initiatives. Co-founder. Planning committee, 1994. Co-chair, 1995-7. Board Chair, 1997-2001. Community Builder Award, 1998.

Outward Bound. Hurricane Island (Maine) and Thompson Island (Boston). Six courses. 1992-present, one as designer, one as assistant, one as instructor.

National Coalition Building Institute. Washington, D.C. Welcoming Diversity/Prejudice Reduction Workshop. Participant, 1992. Trainer certification. 1992.

Paulist Center. Boston. Racial Justice and Reconciliation training. 1992 and 1994.

Babson College. Wellesley, MA. Executive development program. Participant. 1991.

Anti-Racism Training Workshop. Boston. Organizer. Project coordinator. Participant. 1991. Led by Dr. Barbara Riley, National Training Laboratory and Elsie Y. Cross Associates.

The Forum. Boston. Werner Erhard & Associates. Participant. 1988.

National Minority Journalists Job Conference. Boston. American Society of Newspaper Editors/American Newspaper Publishers Association. Chair. 1986.

The United Way. Boston Globe Corporate Director. 1982.

American Press Institute. Reston, VA. Editorial management and development. Participant. 1979 and 1983.

PRESENTATIONS

University of Pennsylvania, Annual Ethnography Conference. *Dilemmas of Teaching and Learning Qualitative Research in One Graduate School Setting*. Panel introduction and discussant. 2006

Boston College, Annual Diversity Challenge Conference. Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture. Presenter. 2005

Building Alliances: Women Leaders and Race. Professional development workshop. Co-designer and co-facilitator. 2004-present.

Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Communications workshop leader. March 2004.

Citywide Dialogues. Boston effort on racial diversity (www.bostondialogues.org). Workshop facilitator. Facilitator task force member. 2003-2005.

Renaissance Weekend. Hilton Head, S.C. Participant and Panelist. 1991-2000.

State of the Neighborhoods Convention. Boston. Panel moderator. 1991.

Evening on Difference. The Park School. Brookline, MA. All-school panel on diversity. Organizer. 1991.

Freedom House. Boston. After-school program presenter and instructor, 1989-91.

Poynter Institute. St. Petersburg, FL. Editorial development. Panelist. 1989.

PUBLICATIONS

(Selected issues of education and diversity only)

Milton Times and Milton Record-Transcript. Numerous articles on annual ¡CelebrateMilton! townwide event. 1995-present.

National Association of Independent Schools. Diversity Planning Project. Co-author. August 1994.

The Boston Globe. BSO Event Kicks Off Diversity Effort, Living section front. April 16, 1992.

New American Schools Development Corporation. Expeditionary Learning: A Design for New American Schools. Convener: Outward Bound USA. Editor. February 1992. (Funding awarded. Program remains in operation nationally.)

The Patriot Ledger. Quincy, MA. Quoted in article about Clarence Thomas hearings.
Page 1. Oct. 16, 1991.

The Park Parent. The Park School. Brookline, MA. Author of articles: 1/91, 3/91, 11/91.

Boston Partners in Education. Edited and published NEXT STEPS. October 1990.

The Boston Globe. Pulitzer-Prize winning series on the race factor in Boston businesses.
Assisted in planning, design. Supervised Pulitzer entry. Quoted in story. 1983.

MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

New England Urban Journalism Program. Board member, 1988-present.

Outward Bound. Thompson Island. Trustee, Committee on Trustees, 1997-2004.
Executive Committee, Diversity Committee 1996-present (chair 1996-2002).

Boston Symphony Orchestra Cultural Diversity Committee. Co-founder and member.
1991-1998.

Black and White Boston Coming Together. Committee member. 1991-present.

Southern Poverty Law Center. Member, 1991-present.

Drifters Ski Club. Executive Committee. 1991-present. President, 2000-02.

United Youth Newspaper. Board member. 1991-5.

Park School Corporation. Member, 1999-present.

The Park School. Parents Association. Board member. Multicultural Committee
Co-Chair. 1990-92.

The Boston Club. Member, 1982-present. Board member, 1986-90.

Mass. Committee for Children and Youth. Board member, 1988-91.

New England Urban Journalism Workshop. UMass/Boston. Board member, 1987-
present. (Founding) Chair, 1987-88.

Thacher Montessori School Parents Association. Co-founder. Steering Committee,
1987-90. Chair, 1988-89.

Rotary Club International Fellow. 1971-72.



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